CONFESSION:
A DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAY.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE EIGHTEENTH ITALIAN EDITION

BY

M. H. G. BUCKLE,

Vicar of Edlingham.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IT might at first sight appear extraordinary that a work which awoke such a lively interest in Italy as to pass rapidly through eighteen editions, and was likewise translated into French and German, should have attracted so little attention in this country as not to be presented to the public in an English dress. But the difference in the relations of the ministers of religion to the people in Roman Catholic countries and in Protestant England is sufficient to remove any ground of surprise. Among populations subject to the sway of Rome the baneful influence of the confessional is universally and keenly felt. From the palace of the sovereign to the meanest hovel of his meanest subject, all, without distinction, have to experience the galling oppression of its yoke. To the individual, the family, and the state, its operations are equally hateful and pernicious. While the Inquisitor fastens only on the body of the suffering martyr, the confessor, with a refinement in cruelty, tortures the most delicate and sensitive

feelings of his victim, and triumphs in inflicting the most excruciating mental agony. To add moral pollution to satanic tyranny, the young of both sexes have their imaginations defiled by minute* and demoralizing inquiries, which, instead of stifling vice, only suggest new forms of it. The parents groan in secret at the prospect of their offspring being subjected to the same debasing process which has sullied the purity, and overclouded the happiness, of their own lives. Too often the wife, reduced into submissive bondage to the confessor, is covertly instigated to rebel against the husband; and family discord is insidiously fomented by priestly interference, invisible in its action, but acutely felt in its results. In important questions affecting the family welfare—the education of the children, the professions of the sons, and the marriages of the daughters—the father finds his rightful authority superseded by the silent encroachments and underhand influences of the con-

* The encyclical letter of Benedict XIV., in Chais, *Lettres sur les Jubilés*, vol. 3, p. lxxi., sq., contains the strictest injunctions on confessors to be minute in the investigation of particulars. In support of his views he quotes the authority of Innocent III., Conc. Lat. iii., cap. *omnis utriusque sexûs*, and Rit. Rom. tit. *de sacr. pœn.* That the Papal see cannot complain of any want of zeal, on the part of its servants, in executing its mandates, is amply attested by the foul contents of various manuals of confession.

fessor. The mutual confidences of home disappear; its tenderest sympathies are destroyed; its fondest associations are marred and disfigured; and the cold shade of the priest casts a withering blight over its best and purest affections. When the work of Desanctis appeared, incontestably proving, to the astonishment and delight of the Italians, that the system of confession was as contradictory to Scripture, antiquity, and reason, as it was fatal to social happiness and national prosperity, its publication was welcomed with eagerness. Edition after edition was exhausted; and a shock was communicated to the Papacy in Italy, under which it continues to reel and stagger to this hour. England, for more than three centuries, has been happily exempt from this moral pestilence; but lately the plague has reappeared; the infection has been propagated with marvellous rapidity; and "The Confessional" of Desanctis will be, at least, a timely, and in many cases, it is to be hoped, an efficacious antidote.

That the author was thoroughly versed in the mysteries of the subject which he treats, may be inferred from the fact that for fourteen years he exercised the office of confessor, and that for seven he held the highly responsible post of parish priest at Rome—being thus, in conformity with Papal usage, brought into intimate relations with the secret police;

while for ten years he fulfilled, though reluctantly, the faculty of consultor to the Roman Inquisition, and would hence be introduced behind the scenes of the religious and political drama enacted at the Papal See.

As a natural consequence of his abandonment of an Antichristian Church, it would follow that his motives would be misrepresented, and his character maligned; for when did any person eminent for learning, eloquence, and virtue, turn his back upon the City of the Seven Hills, and not be cruelly calumniated?* A record of the slanders thus showered on the good and great would compose a volume unparalleled for the virulence and atrocity of its falsehoods. Even from among their own communion, writers occasionally express their indignation at the rancorous mendacity of the Papal champions. Peter Walsh, of the Order of St. Francis, and Professor of Divinity, has the honesty to write thus:—"It were worth the while to consider what it is hurries on our Catholic writers generally to such exorbitant passions and barbarous language (besides many lies and mere calumnies often) against all those who leave our Church" ("Four Letters, etc.," p. 69; ed. 1686). If ever the motives of a change of creed deserved respect, they should have met with reverential consideration in

* See Appendix, note (A).

the case of Desanctis. Fully aware of the extent of the loss he was about to undergo, knowing that he exchanged honour for disgrace, wealth for poverty, fame and distinction for obscurity and disrepute, he heeded not the amount of the sacrifice, but forsaking country, family and friends, he counted all things but dross, so that he might enjoy the clear sunshine of an untroubled conscience, and proclaim with untrammelled freedom the rich mercies of the Gospel in all their purity and fulness. It is curious that for his emancipation he was indebted to one of the many honours heaped on him till they almost equalled in number the years he had been in holy orders. Being appointed to deliver a course of lectures against heretics, he received a licence to read their works. Gradually the light of Divine truth dawned more and more clearly on his mind; and the more earnestly he strove and prayed to be led into the right way, the more did his growing persuasion of the errors of the Church of Rome deepen in intensity. To maintain a struggle against conviction was inconsistent with the candour and integrity conspicuous in the character of Desanctis; and henceforth he resolved to preach the faith which he lately studied to destroy.

Seeking an asylum under British rule in Malta, he found the Romanist inhabitants as barbarous and

superstitious as in the days of Paul; but far from "shewing no small kindness" to a successor of the apostle in making known the glad tidings of the Gospel, they evinced, by their refusal to sell him the common necessaries of life, their conformity to the Apostate Church described in the Revelation of St. John (xii. 17). Great, however, was their astonishment when they beheld Cardinal Feretti, on his entry into the city, throw his arms round the neck of the heretic, and kiss him in the street. For so strong was the personal esteem of Pius IX. for Desanctis, and so highly did he appreciate his position in public opinion, that the Cardinal "was inspired," as he states,* "by the common Father of the faithful, the angel of God upon earth," to win back the stray sheep into the Roman fold. When he failed to convert Desanctis by letter, his eminence followed him to the island, employing every blandishment he could think of to seduce him from the course he had adopted, promising that he should be desecularized, and permitted to marry, reside wherever he chose, and receive a monthly pension of fifty ducats.† Of course, upon Desanctis, both blandishments and bribes were utterly thrown away.

The biography of Bernardino Ochino, an Italian

* Biographia di L. Desanctis, p. 29: Firenze, 1870.

† See Appendix (B).

reformer in the sixteenth century, lately written by Benrath in Germany, and now translated into English, affords a remarkable parallel in the history of the two reformers. Both were admired for their brilliant talents, and highly esteemed for their moral and religious excellence; in both was the rare combination of profound learning, fervid eloquence, and severe logical reasoning; both were anxiously sought for by the cities of Italy as popular and impressive preachers; both were actuated by a burning desire to evangelize the people, yet conscious that the dungeons of the Inquisition would silence them if they attempted it too openly; both were therefore under the painful restraint of only so far opening out the doctrines of the Gospel as the prejudices of their hearers could receive them, or the bigotry of Inquisitors could tolerate; * both were aware that to an orator the loss of his native land is the loss of all, or nearly all, his eminence and usefulness; both were courted and eulogized as long as they continued to adhere to Rome, but bitterly and foully slandered as soon as they abandoned it.† Finally, both preferred the pri-

* "I had long recognized," says Ochino, "the truth of the Gospel through God's grace, and although I mounted the pulpit day after day, yet I dared not openly proclaim it; you may imagine the constant martyrdom I suffered" (Benrath, *B. Ochino*, p. 89).

† According to their usual custom, the Romanists propagated a report that Ochino had recanted in a dangerous illness at

vations of poverty and exile, soothed and alleviated by a good conscience, to wealth and honours almost as vast as avarice could covet, or ambition aspire to, but with the consciousness that they could only possess them as partakers in the guilt of Antichrist.

For the Appendix, and the notes marked [*T*], the translator desires to say that he is alone responsible.

In strict correctness the terms *Romanists*, or *Roman Catholics*, should in many places have been used instead of *Catholics*, but the translator has deemed it advisable to adhere to the phraseology of the author.

Geneva, and been murdered in consequence by the followers of Calvin. The truth is, that after being attacked by the plague, and losing three of his four children by it, he died at Schlackau in Moravia. (*Ibid.*, ch. ix., p. 298.)

PREFACE.

TO THE ITALIANS.*

To you, my brethren and fellow-countrymen, I dedicate this little work. Religion and patriotism are the two thoughts of my life: to consolidate and incorporate in Italy these two thoughts is the work which every good citizen should assist who knows man to be far superior to a brute, inasmuch as he has a soul to save, and a native land to defend. Atheists, libertines, and they who make a trade of religion, have always been their country's scourge.

Jesus Christ, the Divine benefactor of humanity, ushered the Gospel of peace into the world, to give man a foretaste on earth of the happiness prepared for His elect in heaven. But the priests took possession of the Divine code which Christ had bequeathed to His people, and pronounced it their

* It should be remembered that this address was written many years before the liberation of Italy, and the abolition of the temporal power of the Papacy.—[*T.*]

exclusive property; they new-fashioned it at first, then they corrupted it at pleasure, introducing so many additions as to give it the appearance of the patchwork coat of a harlequin. Confession, mass, indulgences, purgatory, celibacy, the supremacy and infallibility of the popes, the Inquisition, and other matters of the kind, are as much to be found in the Gospel, as religious toleration in the Koran.

The corruption of the Gospel is the work of eighteen centuries; the work of a great and compact party,—a party which alone in the barbarous ages held the key of knowledge, and well understood how to profit by times, places, and persons. What would be the natural result of so many dark manœuvres? We are convinced, by a fatal experience, that from those who have made a traffic of religion has proceeded the oppression of the world, and that by them have been forged the chains which weigh so heavily on humanity.

Men who from simple facts draw hasty conclusions, observing the oppressions inflicted by the priests in the name of religion, believe that from religion arises despotism, and execrate the most holy religion of Christ. Italians, let us not imitate a nation prone to run into excesses and extravagances; but let us be always like ourselves. Popes and priests have made slaves of us, have sought, and still seek, to

trample us under foot; but, noble as our fathers, and charitable as becomes Christians, let us crumble their usurped throne into dust, but, with Christian charity, let us leave their persons in peace. They have made us slaves, because they have abused the Gospel; but let us reassert our rightful claim to the Gospel of Christ; let us resume the pure religion which the great apostle of the Gentiles preached to our fathers, and unfolding the banner of the Gospel under the eyes of the priests, we shall be sufficiently avenged if we see them blush, and slink into their dens.

Brother Italians! I am known to many of you; but to those who do not know me, I confess, to my salutary shame, that I also made part of that clergy which I now denounce, of that Church which has corrupted the Gospel. But the first down had not yet sprouted on my cheeks, when, a mere stripling of a fervid imagination, I assumed the clerical habit, trusting, in good faith, thus to assist the land of my birth, which I have always dearly loved, and which, in my exile, has been my first thought, after God. Persuaded that the Gospel alone could confer happiness, I believed that in adopting the clericate I should follow the Gospel more closely, and thus render myself useful to humanity and the calls of patriotism. But I was speedily undeceived.

To fulfil the beneficent intentions of the Gospel, I had associated myself with a body of the clergy dedicated by their institute to the relief of suffering humanity, and having for their device the sublime sentiment of the man-God, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). But this institution, like all the rest, having degenerated from its principles, is now nothing more than a hypocritical pretence.

At the first outbreak in Italy of the deadly Asiatic disease, I solicited and obtained permission to offer my life for the relief of my brethren, as the Gospel urged me; and the temporary hospital of St. Bartholomew at Genoa (1835), and the Lateran hospital at Rome (1837), received me within their walls as long as the disease continued; and these months, I may affirm, were the only happy time of my past life. But God declined to accept the sacrifice—perhaps to reserve me as an instrument of some little benefit to my Italian brothers; if it be thus, I render grateful thanks to His infinite mercy.

For a long time I had been enabled to discern the infamous impostures of the priests, and the atrocities perpetrated by the Popes against the Gospel. But how was I to act? As yet I had not the courage to declare myself openly, as I have

since done. I should have exposed myself to the horrible alternative of either falling into the hands of the Inquisition, or of having to abandon my beloved country. In neither case could I assist my fellow-countrymen. I selected the middle course; I remained in my native land, and devoted myself wholly to popular preaching, with the object of improving the morality of the people, and rendering them capable of listening to the truth of the Gospel.

Criminals condemned to the galleys, prisoners, soldiers, and the lower classes, were the chosen portion of my apostleship; the unhappy, and the simple-minded appeared to me the most productive soil on which to scatter Gospel seed.

But with whatever caution I endeavoured to act, I could not avoid the lynx-eyed watchfulness of the Inquisition. Although belonging, yet involuntarily, to that tribunal,* I could not escape a trial and condemnation. They are recorded in the register of October 1843. I was accused of having promulgated sentiments of little respect for the Pope, of not believing him to be Vicar of Christ, and of having

* I was appointed by Pope Gregory XVI. Qualifier (or Theologian) of the Supreme Holy Inquisition of Rome; and I keep by me the original certificate of nomination, with the great seal of the Roman Inquisition. It is dated 9th June, 1837.

Italian tendencies. The anonymous accusations were received by Cardinal Lambruschini, who remitted them to the tribunal of the Inquisition with orders to depose me from the office of parish priest, and banish me from the Roman States; and this sentence was to be intimated to me before I was heard in examination, and without admitting me to make any defence. Not the defender of criminals, who was a priest, but the lay advocate, resisted such an infamous mode of procedure, and obtained the concession that I should at least be submitted to examination. I was heard; I had not the cowardice to renounce my convictions, nor yet had I the courage to maintain them boldly; but involving my answers in equivocal terms, and adducing in reply to the accusations my indefatigable preaching, and my other ecclesiastical labours, I prevailed that the sentence of deposition and exile should be changed into a warning, under the penalty *ad arbitrio,* not to continue to speak as I had done before; and further, to a ten days' seclusion in a Jesuit convent.*

This storm being thus overpast, I lived under the

* The ten days' seclusion I passed in the convent of St. Eusebius, no one knowing that I was there under sentence of condemnation. Apparently I went of my own accord; and the Jesuits themselves never knew that my abode there was otherwise than voluntary.

watchful eyes of the informers of the Holy Office, and hence had to act with greater caution; yet not so effectually as to escape the frequent animadversions of the superiors, who told me they could not understand how so much zeal for the good of others should be accompanied by so little attachment to the doctrines of the Church.

In the meantime Pius IX. appeared upon the scene, and seemed for a moment to proclaim one of the maxims of the Gospel—forgiveness. Italy was all wonder and excitement; the autocrats were dismayed; it was believed that a Pope would be able to cause the Divine code and liberty once more to triumph; and this almost universal persuasion produced the evils under which our poor country now groans. I was persuaded that Pius IX., not from principle, but from mere ignorant good nature, might effect a political amelioration in my native country; but at the same time, seeing a Pope at the head of a revolution, and the people following him with a fanatical enthusiasm, I perceived distinctly that there was no opening for resuscitating in Italy the pure Gospel, and the holy religion of our forefathers; and therefore with tears in my eyes I abandoned my dear native land; I sacrificed office, honours, titles, friends, relations, to my religious convictions, and voluntarily withdrew into exile, throwing myself

into the arms of that Providence which never abandons him who trusts it.*

In my exile I have made open profession of the Gospel, have published the reasons of my abandonment of the Church of the Popes in a letter to my former superior, and in four letters to the Pope's cardinal vicar. In a journal which I am now editing, I explain the doctrines of the Gospel, the errors of the Church of Rome, the history of its popes; and show that Italy can never be happy until she resumes the ancient religion of our fathers, the pure Gospel.†

But such publications appear to me by no means adequate—nay, far too slow in their operation—to provide, as I would desire, for the religious wants of my dear fellow-countrymen. Wherefore, encouraged by a society interested in the welfare of the Peninsula,‡ I now propose to treat separately of

* I quitted Rome definitively, September 11th, 1847.

† This preface was written in Malta, when I was engaged on a periodical of a religious character, entitled "*The Catholic Christian*," in which the doctrines of the Gospel, free from sectarian influence, were propounded in a popular style.

‡ The pious society here alluded to is not a society for Protestant proselytism, but a small association belonging to no particular Protestant denomination. Its object is to present to the Italians the Gospel detached from any sectarian admixture. It desires that neither politics, nor a sectarian spirit,

certain particular errors of the Church of Rome; of those errors especially which have served, and continue to serve, as instruments of tyranny, despotism, and oppression — errors absolutely condemned by the Gospel. First among these is the doctrine and practice of confession; and with this will commence the series of these slight publications of mine.

In this essay (which for its brevity I do not venture to call a treatise) I shall show that confession of sins to a priest is not only not based on the Gospel, but on the contrary is opposed to its doctrines; that it is a source of corruption for the clergy and the people; that it is a perpetual and universal system of espionage; that it is a hindrance, as long as it endures, to the possibility of any permanent civil reformation.

O my Italian brothers, it is not ambition, it is not temporal interest, that impels the pen of the poor exile. That these two passions have not taken root in me, both my voluntary exile, and my abandonment of everything, are a speaking proof. My only object is your good. I do not come to say to you, as your priests do, "Leave us the good things of earth, and we will give you those of heaven;" but I say to you,

should be mixed up with the Gospel; but solely encourages the propagation of it as it is written, and not any especial branch whatever of Protestantism.

"Accept the Gospel; attach yourselves to Him who said, 'Come to Me all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you;' and then you will have the happiness of earth and, what is far better, happiness eternal."

L. DESANCTIS.

MALTA, *September 15th*, 1849.

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CONFESSION:

A DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAY.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT CONFESSION IS.

MAN, after he had sinned, fell into a state of abasement, as a criminal condemned to drag his chain. The only thing that could uplift his soul, justly abased, was firm faith in the promise made by God Himself of a Redeemer who could *alone* repair, and would effectually repair his fall. The promise of a Redeemer leads to the conclusion that man cannot of himself expiate his sin before God. Faith in this promise conduced to two practical consequences: the first, to confess to the Deity, even in the presence of our equals, our unworthiness, our sin; the second, to accept with faith and gratitude the expiation of the Redeemer. But man, not yielding entire faith to the promise of God, has sought to effect by his own means the expiation of his sin. The expiation is preceded

by confession; and herein is contained the reason why in all the ancient religions, as we shall see,* expiation is preceded by confession.

In the doctrine revealed by God we find the necessity of confession; but confession made to God alone,—confession as a testimony tendered to God of our guilt and our incapacity to atone for our errors, looking to His mercy to apply the atonement of the Redeemer. The natural man, in the pride of his heart, would expiate his sin by his own means; hence he confesses it secretly to certain persons who style themselves vicegerents of God, and the judges authorised by Him to release the sinner from his sin, and impose the satisfaction to be presented by him to God. Such is the doctrine of the Roman Church.

* The fulfilment of this promise seems to have escaped the attention of the author. But from the following references it will be seen that auricular confession was enjoined in the Eleusinian Mysteries, and by Zoroaster and Buddha, and practised by the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, the Mexicans before Cortes, and Peruvians before Pizarro, by the Japanese, Siamese, and others.—Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, ch. i., p. 15, sq.: Lond., 1871; Eusebe Salverte, *Des Sciences Occultes*, ch. xxvi., p. 428; Potter, *Grecian Antiquities*, vol. i., p. 451: Edin., 1818; Dupuis, *De tous les Cultes*, vol. iv., p. 312, Paris; *L'An Trois de la République;* Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii., pp. 355-6: Lond., 1841; Mosheim, *Eccl. Hist.*, Cent. XVII., Sect. i., Paragr. 15, vol. v., pp. 33-4, n. (*a*): Lond., 1825; Boucher, *Hist. des Jésuites*, p. 202, n. (1): Paris, 1845; Collette, *Novelties of Romanism*, p. 235, Ed. 2; Bancroft, *Native Races*, etc.—[*T.*]

The catechism of the Council of Trent * gives the following definition of the confession of sins, calling it sacramental: "An accusation of sins which appertains to the *genus* sacrament, and made with a view to obtain pardon by virtue of the keys." †

It is not a Protestant theologian who has framed this definition, nor yet any particular theologian of the Roman Church, so that the author might be charged either with falsehood or with ignorance; but it is the Roman Church itself which, in its authentic catechism, informs us what is its doctrine on confession. Hence, according to this definition, the Roman Church believes two things, at once absurd and impious. First, that pardon of sins is obtained by means of confession; next, that pardon of sins is granted by virtue of certain keys which the Roman Church pretends alone to possess. We shall see in the sequel the absurdity and impiety of such doctrines. Enough for the present to have noticed them.

With Protestants, confession is the manifestation of our offences to God, not as to one who does not know our sins, but as made to an affectionate Father, who is pleased to see His sons bending low at His feet, and

* Catech. Conc. Trid., P. II., No. 50: *De Sacr. Pœn.*

† *Confessio sacramentalis est peccatorum accusatio, quæ ad sacramenti genus pertinet, eo suscepta ut veniam virtute clavium impetremus.*

acknowledging and confessing their error; not to obtain from a man forgiveness of sins committed against God, but to obtain pardon from the God of mercy whose property it is to forgive sins (Mark ii.). Confession, therefore, with Roman Catholics, is only the manifestation of their trespasses to a human sinner, by whose intervention forgiveness is believed to be obtained from God; with Protestants it is the confession of their offences to God, to obtain forgiveness by means of the blood of Jesus Christ.

There are four modes of practising confession among Protestants: the first is public confession; the second, secret; the third, confession to a minister; the fourth, confession to a layman. For the benefit of whoever is not instructed in these different modes of confessing, practised in the reformed Churches, we will give a very brief explanation, which will also serve to nullify the calumny of Catholic priests, who disseminate reports among the people that Protestants do not confess.

Public confession is practised in Protestant churches every Sunday at the least, when the people are assembled for divine service. One cannot help being moved even to tears on finding oneself for the first time, after coming out of the Church of Rome, in a Protestant church at the moment of confession. All the people bending low before God, who sees the heart, follow the confession made in a loud voice by the minister

in the name of the people. You seem to behold Moses, Joshua, Daniel, or Nehemiah, when they confessed before God the sins of the people; and you seem, as then, to behold forgiveness descend from the Father of mercies. Those fervid professions of grief, of amendment, of compunction for offences committed against a loving Father, cannot descend into our hearts without affecting and consoling them.

Secret confession is practised by Protestants in private prayer, when, following the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. vi.), we withdraw into retirement to pray. Then the believer, deeply impressed with the greatness of that God in whose presence he appears, learns his misery, acknowledges his unworthiness, and, like the prodigal son, falls prostrate before a loving Father, and bursting forth, in the expansion of his heart, into tears of repentance, confesses his sinfulness in the presence of his Father, and receives forgiveness—an earnest of which is that sweet consolation which is never felt in departing from a confessional of the Roman Church.

Confession to a minister is likewise practised in the Protestant Church. When the Christian finds himself troubled and disquieted for the state of his soul, he has recourse to the minister, who, by his unaffected gravity, and his unimpeachable religious life, inspires the sinner with confidence; then he lays bare his

conscience, and asks for counsels of salvation. How different is this confession from that which is made to Roman Catholic priests! The Protestant knows from the Gospel that God alone remits sin, and he does not go to the minister, like the Catholic, to receive absolution from him, but to receive, as from a truly religious man, salutary counsels, and the help of prayer. The Protestant knows that Christ has not desired to tyrannize over souls, obliging them to disclose their transgressions to a sinful man; and he goes voluntarily, without compulsion; he knows that he has no need to bring an exact inventory of even his most secret thoughts; he knows that he has not to undergo a meddlesome interrogatory; he knows that he is not subjected to an infamous informer, but to a man of piety and experience, to whom he submits himself of his own accord; and through the counsels and prayers of the pious man he humbles himself together with him before God, gains warmth in prayer, and finds in the minister a brother who sympathises, not a judge who upbraids, acquitting or condemning at his own caprice.

Confession to a layman is practised in the Protestant Church in two modes, according to the teaching of St. James (James v. 16): either by way of counsel, when the one has so much confidence in the other as to reveal the state of his soul in order to receive

counsel and help in prayer; or when one confesses to another his wrong-doings, that he may obtain forgiveness.

But he who, without belonging to any Protestant denomination, wishes simply to be a Christian as our fathers were in the apostolic times, he who wishes purely and simply to follow the instructions of the Bible, what confession ought he to make? By no means do we disapprove the confessions in the different Protestant Churches, provided no superstition attaches to them; but we believe that, as God alone pardons sins, and pardons them through His mercy in Jesus Christ, so to God alone ought we to have recourse by means of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. To God alone, like the prodigal son (Luke xv.), and the publican (Luke xviii.), ought we to confess our sins. When we have trespassed against a brother, to him ought we to confess our wrong-doing, and from him obtain forgiveness; when we have scandalized the Church, to the Church, and not to its minister, ought we to confess our offence. This, we see, and not confession to a man, is Scriptural confession.

Thus far a sufficient explanation appears to have been given of what confession is, both among Catholics and Protestants.* Let us now see whether the Word of God favours the confession of the Catholics.

* Appendix C.

CHAPTER II.

CONFESSION OF SINS, AS PRACTISED IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAS NO FOUNDATION IN THE WORD OF GOD.

THE greatest theologian of the Roman Church, the greatest defender of Papal abuses, Thomas Aquinas,* speaking of confession as practised in the Roman Church, whilst he would maintain its Divine institution, is forced to admit that no such institution is met with in the Bible. The candid confession of Thomas Aquinas offended the great Jesuit controversialist, Cardinal Bellarmine, who discovered the institution of confession as early as the third chapter of Genesis, and detected confessional boxes in the earthly paradise. To give a sample of the extravagance of this theologian, and of the abuse of the Bible practised by Roman controversialists, I will indicate certain passages adduced by the Cardinal in proof of auricular confession.

* In Sum. Theolog. Supplement., art. 6, ad. 2: *Præceptum de confessione non est ab homine primo institutum, quamvis sit a Jacobo promulgatum; sed a Deo institutionem habuit; quamvis expressa ipsius institutio non legatur.*

In chap iii. of Genesis, according to Bellarmine, auricular confession is first spoken of as necessary to obtain the pardon of sins. But the good Cardinal failed to observe that there was no priest there to listen to the cónfessions of Adam and Eve, who, instead of confessing their sin, excused it; and God, instead of pronouncing over them a formulary of absolution, pronounces a sentence of condemnation.

Another proof that auricular confession was instituted by God, Cardinal Bellarmine finds in the obduracy of Cain (Gen. iv.), who shamelessly denies his sin to the very God who seeth all things. What a beautiful model of confession did the zealous Jesuit present to his fair penitents! With the same theological phantasmagoria he exhibits —to whoever is inclined to believe it—auricular confession as described in chap. v. of Leviticus, in chap. v. of Numbers, and in every other place in the Pentateuch where leprosy is spoken of. It does not seem possible that theological extravagance, not to say theological effrontery, could be carried farther. But poor Bellarmine was a Jesuit—was a Cardinal,— and one must needs forgive him; to people of that kind any amount of latitude is permitted.* Besides, the object was to give a sure foundation to one of the chief corner-stones of the Papal edifice, so rudely

* Appendix D.

shaken by the Reformers; and the champion of Rome caught at such weapons as he had at his disposal.

No less extraordinary are the proofs extracted by Roman theologians from the New Testament to demonstrate the Divine institution of auricular confession. In chap. iii., vers. 5, 6, of the Gospel of St. Matthew, it is said that the people of Jerusalem, and of the region round about, went to John the Baptist, and were baptized, confessing their sins. To deduce from this passage the institution of confession, would be the same thing as deducing the temporal dominion of the Pope from the passage of St. John (chap. xviii.), "My kingdom is not of this world." The worthy Bellarmine did not observe, or pretended not to observe, the absurd consequences that followed from his argument. Let us assume that in this place an allusion to confession is intended. It would legitimately ensue that confession was not necessarily to be made to a priest, for St. John was none; it would legitimately ensue that it ought to be made in public, not in private; that it ought to be made solely in the act of receiving baptism; that the Council of Trent had erred when it said that Jesus Christ instituted confession after His resurrection; when it said that it was instituted for sins committed after baptism; and a hundred other consequences not less absurd.

The fact of the resurrection of Lazarus has been

put in requisition by the Roman theologians among the proofs of auricular confession. Lazarus, when he came forth from the sepulchre, was bound hands and feet, and Jesus ordered them to be loosed (John xi.). Hence, say the Roman priests, with logic entirely their own, Jesus Christ thereby wished to indicate that to the disciples it belongs to loose those who, by the grace of God, rise again. Behold, then, a clear proof of confession by Divine institution!

Not to take the trouble of demonstrating the ridiculous absurdity of such an argument, let us only observe that not to the disciples, but to the Jews who came to console the sisters of Lazarus, Jesus gave directions to loose His friend, who had risen again: hence, if from these words it is to be inferred that the faculty of loosing from sins was granted to those who were directed to loose Lazarus, it would result, as a necessary and immediate consequence, that the Jews had obtained a similar power.

They adduce, in proof of confession, the fact related in the Acts (chap. xix. 18): "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds." One must be thoroughly prejudiced in favour of confession to desire to support it with this passage! We have no desire to theologize, in order to lead the people, for whom we write, to understand the passage in question in the same sense as we understand it. No: let

our readers judge for themselves; let them read not ver. 18 only, but from ver. 13 to 20, and they will see that the miracles that Paul wrought by the power of God, and the mockery of the false exorcists by the evil spirit, terrified the new converts of Ephesus to such a degree, that *many* of them confessed their deeds—probably the wrong they had done in not believing Paul sooner. Where do we here find the confessional boxes? They publicly confess their deeds. Where is the compulsion? They went voluntarily; not all, but *many*. In this passage it is a case of public, not of auricular confession; of free, not of compulsory confession.

It is not our object to compose a complete treatise on this subject; hence we deem it enough to have given this little specimen, by way of showing what is the logic of Roman theologians for the establishment of their doctrine.

A more serious examination, however, is required for certain texts of the New Testament, which, with Roman theologians, are champion passages for the positive establishment of auricular confession by right Divine.

First to present itself is chap. xvi. of St. Matthew, ver. 19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever

thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." There is no one who is ignorant of the use which the Roman Church makes of this text; it is the true Trojan horse, and the storehouse of all their inventions. From this text it extracts the supremacy of the Pope, the power of loosing or retaining sins at pleasure; whence arises Papal absolution, not only in this world, but likewise in the life to come,—the Pope pretending to exclude whomsoever he pleases from the kingdom of Christ. Hence the power of indulgences and the absolute dominion over purgatory, through the ability of loosing and liberating from that prison whosoever pays best; hence the authority to release from any obligation whatever, from any promise whatever, from any oath whatever; hence the privilege of raising war, deposing sovereigns, releasing subjects from the duty of obedience, and excommunicating subjects in their turn, according to the interests of the Papal Court, which are called the interests of the Church and of religion; hence a thousand other absurdities which it were tedious to detail.

We will examine this passage as far as it refers to confession.

In this place a promise is made by Jesus Christ to St. Peter, which, according to the Council of Trent, was realized after the Resurrection, as St. John tells

us in chap. xx. of his Gospel; when Jesus Christ, the evening of the very day of His resurrection, while the *disciples* were assembled, stood in the midst, and said to them (ver. 21), "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." All the theologians, and the Council of Trent itself, agree that the words cited from chap. xvi. of St. Matthew receive their force from the words of chap. xx. of St. John. To understand their true signification, let us see, before we attend to anything else, to whom they are addressed.

If it were asserted that they were addressed to Peter alone, it would be a contradiction to the letter of the Gospel, which in chap. xx. of St. John addresses them directly to the *disciples;* if it should be said that the words of chap. xvi. of St. Matthew were addressed to Peter alone, we shall reply that it was only a simple promise; that the whole Roman Church recognizes the completion of it in chap. xx. of St. John; we shall say, in short, that the Roman Church itself admits that the so-called power of the *keys*, in chap. xvi. of St. Matthew, is nothing else than the power of loosing and binding,—that is,

of remitting or retaining sins; but seeing that not to Peter alone was this power given, so these words are not addressed to Peter alone.

Thus far we are in accord with the Roman Church; but now we begin to disagree. Building on a certain tradition of hers, the Roman Church believes that the words were addressed to the apostles alone; we, building on the Word of God itself, believe that they were addressed to all the faithful. St. John (chap. xx. 19) says very distinctly that Jesus stood in the midst of the *disciples*, breathed on them, and said to them, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc. That by the word *disciples*, not the apostles alone ought to be understood, but all the followers of Jesus Christ, appears very clearly from the context. From the moment of the death of Jesus Christ, His disciples for some time constantly assembled together in great numbers by common consent; these disciples were not the apostles alone, but were about a hundred and twenty persons (Acts i. 15), including the women. On the very day of the Resurrection all the disciples were assembled together with the women (Luke xxiv. 9); it was on the evening of the same day of the Resurrection, John tells us (chap. xx. 19), that Jesus bestowed such a power on His disciples; but on that evening there were not the apostles only in the assembly, but all the other disciples, and Jesus made

no exception, but said to all, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you . . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained;" hence the power of remitting and retaining sins was not given to the apostles only, but to all the disciples, and to the women also who were with them.

That on this evening of the Resurrection not the apostles only were in the place where Jesus Christ appeared, but all the others with them, St. Luke tells us plainly (chap. xxiv. 33); hence to the apostles and to those who were with them Jesus spoke those words. Now, this is certain—that when Jesus or the apostles say anything referring generally to the disciples, it ought to be understood of whatsoever time and whatsoever place; hence, there being nothing in the words quoted which restricts their sense to the apostles alone, or to those disciples who were present, it follows that the power of absolving or retaining sins has been granted to all the disciples of the Saviour, of all times and of all places.

But who are the disciples of the Saviour? Let us learn from Jesus Christ Himself. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John viii. 31); "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you . . . ye shall be my disciples" (John xv. 7, 8);

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35); "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27); and thus in many other places of the Gospel. Jesus Christ, therefore, having granted the power of remitting or retaining sins to all His disciples of all times and all places, and the disciples of Jesus Christ being those who continue in the word of Jesus Christ, abide in Jesus Christ, love one another, and bear the cross with Jesus Christ, it follows that such power does not belong exclusively to the priests, but to all true Christians. Therefore, let Catholic, Protestant, priest, bishop, Pope, call himself, if he will, a Christian; if he is not a disciple of Jesus Christ according to the character which the Redeemer gives of His disciples, he will not possess the faculty in question. Therefore the passage adduced proves nothing in favour of confession. Therefore the foundation on which the whole theological edifice of confession is based, is a false foundation. If the words of the Lord do not confer on the apostles an especial faculty of remitting sins, the Roman Church has based her confession on falsehood.

For the better elucidation of this interesting doctrine, let us give an interpretation of the passage, which has been rendered thus obscure because men

have desired to make Jesus Christ say that which He has not said,—an interpretation which we shall not extract from the dark labyrinth of the Fathers, but from the clear fountain of the Divine Word.

The celebrated declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ by no means indicates the power of one sinner to remit the sins of another sinner, but indicates the admirable power inherent in the Divine Word—the Word of life, which all true believers carry with them, shining as lights in the world (Phil. ii. 15). This is the power of loosing and binding, of destroying and saving, of pardoning and retaining sins,—a power which is not peculiar to any particular men, nor communicated to them by other men, but belongs to all the disciples of Jesus Christ; not because it is a power united to them, but it is attached to the Divine Word, the Word of Jesus Christ, which dwells in His disciples, and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which to some is salvation, and to others condemnation, as Scripture teaches (1 Cor. i. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 3).

St. Paul was not present in the assembly of the disciples when Jesus Christ gave them the power of remitting and retaining sins; he was converted after the ascension of the Lord into heaven; he protests that he received nothing from the other apostles, yet he professes to possess this power, and declares what it is (2 Cor. iv. 7); calls it a treasure committed to

earthen vessels—that is, to men,—but committed to them that the excellency of this power may be of God, and not of men; but this excellent power, according to St. Paul, is the preaching of the Divine Word—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Herein behold that which binds and looses, that which remits and retains sins, that which opens and shuts the gates of heaven; behold the celebrated power of the keys given to the true disciples of Jesus Christ: this is the only sense in which that mighty attribute bestowed by Jesus Christ on His Church can be understood. It is thus St. Peter first used those keys on the day of Pentecost, when he opened the kingdom of heaven on earth—that is, added to the disciples about three thousand souls (Acts ii. 41) by means of his evangelical preaching; it is thus that he remitted their sins by the word of salvation, and retained them to those who did not receive that word; it is thus that by the same apostle all true believers are called priests, because to all has been given to preach the excellence of Him who from darkness hath called us into His marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9). The passages, then, which the Roman Church employs in proof of its confession, in no way assist her cause. Therefore the confession of sins appointed by the Roman Church has no foundation in the Word of God.

I say nothing of that other celebrated passage so much employed by the Roman Church,—"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18); it would be trifling with the reader to give any weight whatever to this passage, the object of which is evidently to exhibit the mutual forgiveness which we ought to grant one another in mutual offences. And even if it were to be understood of the remission of sins, the reasoning applied to the previous passage (Matt. xvi.) is likewise most applicable to the present.*

* Appendix C.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORD OF GOD IS CONTRARY TO THE CONFESSION OF SINS AS ESTABLISHED IN THE ROMAN CHURCH.

NOT to be wearisome by prolixity in this our short essay, we will forbear to cite all the passages of the Old Testament in which sinners are instructed in the method of obtaining pardon of sins, yet without the slightest hint of confession to a priest. In the New Testament we have two most convincing arguments against auricular confession; the first negative, the second positive.

The negative argument is of very great force in our case; and for this reason, that in treating of a thing necessary to salvation*—"the second plank after

* In Bishop Hay's "Sincere Christian" the following question and answer occur: "*Q.* Is this" [auricular] "confession of our sins necessary for obtaining absolution? *A.* It is ordained by Jesus Christ as *absolutely necessary* for this purpose."—Vol. ii., p. 68. See also "Poor Man's Manual," in use in Ireland, pp. 109, 110. And so also do Ritualists profess that by confession to a priest only can forgiveness be obtained;

shipwreck," as the Council of Trent* calls it—the only means of obtaining forgiveness of sins after baptism—Jesus Christ, or at least the apostles, must have spoken clearly, that no one might be liable to deceive himself on a subject of so vast importance. We have the institution and customary use of baptism and the Holy Supper in the times of Jesus and the apostles most distinctly described. Why, then, is no mention ever made in the New Testament of confession, which, according to the Roman Church, is more necessary to salvation than communion itself? We see in the New Testament the apostles themselves baptizing, and the first believers celebrating the supper of the Lord: why do we never see the apostles in the confession-chair? Why did those first believers never confess? The Apostle St. Paul describes minutely in his letters to Timothy and Titus all the duties of bishops, priests, and deacons: why among these duties is there not that of listening to the confessions of the faithful, and of absolving them? St. Peter and St. Paul, and all the other apostles, speak of all the duties of the faithful: why do they not speak of the duty of revealing their sins

and that "He who confesses to God *may* be forgiven; he who confesses to a priest *must* be forgiven."—Loraine, "Church of England," etc., pp. 33, 34.—[*T.*]

* Sess. vi., chap. 14.

to a priest if they wish to be saved? St. James alone (chap. v., ver. 16) speaks of a certain kind of confession which we ought to make to each other of our faults when we have a disagreement with a brother—certainly not of a confession to be made to a priest. Now if confession were a sacrament, if it were as necessary as the Roman Church asserts, is it imaginable that neither Jesus Christ nor the apostles should have spoken of it? This negative argument is, to my apprehension, so strong, that, in default of any other argument whatever, it would suffice to prove confession not to be necessary to salvation. But we have likewise positive arguments; and these consist of facts, of parables, and of instructions.

Facts. Jesus Christ forgave the sins of many without hearing their confessions, and without sending them to the apostles to confess. The paralytic obtained forgiveness of his sins from Jesus Christ, solely by faith, without confession of any kind (Mark ii. 5); the woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 47—50) obtained forgiveness of her many sins from Jesus Christ without any confession; and Jesus said on that occasion that she was saved, not by confession, but by faith and love. Zacchæus did anything but confess his faults in order to procure forgiveness; he rather defended himself (Luke xix.), and obtained the pardon of his sins from the Redeemer, because he

believed in Him. Peter, without confession, received the pardon of his most grievous sin with a single look of the Lord (Luke xxii. 61). Paul, the persecutor, obtained the remission of his sins without confession; and if he was referred to the disciple Ananias (Acts ix.), it was that he might receive his sight. Let a single instance be cited out of the New Testament, in which auricular confession is imposed as an indispensable condition for receiving remission of sins, and we will acknowledge ourselves beaten.

But, we may be told, Jesus Christ was not bound to subject to any conditions the pardon which He Himself granted. It is true, we reply: but why do we not find a single case of pardon granted to any one who had not faith? Whence we conclude that as Jesus Christ would never pardon sin in any one who had not faith, it follows that faith is an indispensable condition for the pardon of sins; and since not a single instance exists in which the confession of sins to a man was required by Jesus Christ, in order to grant forgiveness, we therefore conclude that confession is not an indispensable condition for obtaining forgiveness.

While the parables of the Gospel are the most sublime teaching, they are likewise the most exact. They were spoken by the Redeemer to explain His sublime doctrines; whence they are never deficient in

clearness. If, therefore, there are parables in which the sublime doctrine of remission of sins is explained, and no mention made of confession to the priest, we shall have the fullest reason to say that this confession is not regarded by Christ as necessary, and is therefore excluded as being at all events useless. Take first the parable of the publican (Luke xviii.). Deeply humiliated in the Temple, not before a priest, but before God, the publican "smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner:" and that publican was justified. Hence faith, humility, repentance, confession to God and not to man, are the conditions necessary for the pardon of sin,—and not confession.

Chap. xv. of St. Luke is entirely designed to teach the most interesting doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Jesus Christ brings forward two parables to explain this doctrine with the greatest possible perspicuity: the first is the parable of the lost sheep, wherein He describes the sinner who returns to the fold; from which parable He deduces this consequence: "Even so, I say unto you, there shall be joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The repentance, then, that springs from faith, and not confession to man, is the condition prescribed by Jesus Christ to obtain the pardon of sin. The other parable is that of the prodigal son,

in which the Redeemer clearly describes what the sinner has to do in order to obtain forgiveness; and here also not a word is to be found of confession to man, but solely of confession to God, designated in that merciful father. The silence, therefore, on confession to man, when it must have been necessarily spoken of had it been indispensable or expedient, absolutely involves the exclusion of that condition.

But more explicitly still does He positively exclude it in His teaching. In the prayer which the same Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to make (Matt. vi.; Luke xi.), He tells us to pray thus: "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Here, then, are the conditions which He informs us are essential to obtaining forgiveness: faith, by which we believe that God is able and willing to pardon us; charity, by which we pardon whosoever has offended us. In fact, after the prayer, He goes on to instruct us thus: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Where do we here find confession to a priest? If confession to a priest had been necessary, He would have said, "If ye forgive your brethren, and confess your sins to a priest, ye will receive forgiveness."

We shall presently see the precise conditions that the Lord Jesus Christ has attached to forgiveness of sins; be it enough to observe just now that from

these conditions confession to a priest is entirely excluded.

Before He ascended into heaven, in the last discourse which He held with the apostles, Jesus spoke to them of the most interesting doctrine of the remission of sins, as it was taught in Scripture, from which He would never diverge. Then was the time to speak of confession as a condition indispensable to forgiveness; but instead He speaks of the forgiveness which would be bestowed by preaching in His name. Here are the words of Jesus Christ, reported by St. Luke (chap. xxiv. 46, 47): "And He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." And here we ought to take notice, that not having in this place especially spoken of confession, He must be understood as having positively excluded it; seeing that they are the final instructions given by the Saviour to His disciples. It is therefore inconceivable that He had forgotten to speak of a doctrine so interesting: He speaks of the remission of sins, not of confession; therefore confession is excluded from the conditions necessary to obtain forgiveness.

In chapters ii. and iii. of the Apocalypse Jesus Christ reproves the angels of the seven churches (who,

according to the common interpretations, were not spirits, but men), on account of some of their sins; and He teaches them the method of receiving forgiveness. Now, what was that method? Confession? No, indeed,—but repentance; hence confession is absolutely excluded from the Gospel.

Thus did the apostles also understand it. St. Peter (Acts x.), in preaching for the first time to the Gentiles, speaks of the fundamental doctrine of the remission of sins, and speaks of it thus: "And He" (Jesus Christ) "commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." St. Paul, preaching in Antioch (Acts xiii.), announces in these terms (ver. 38) the doctrine of remission of sins: "Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man" (Jesus Christ) "is preached unto you the remission of sins." Is it possible that St. Peter, who has treated of so many points of doctrine and morality, and St. Paul, who has taught everything which relates to religion, and has even spoken of some things appertaining to discipline, should neither of them have mentioned a doctrine so interesting as confession would be?

But all these authorities, some one may reply, only

constitute a negative argument, because none of them exclude confession by name. Should any one raise this objection, we reply that, in some cases, as in this of ours, the force of the negative argument is such that it is absolutely equivalent to a positive argument. In the second place, we shall say that the fact that neither Jesus Christ nor the apostles spoke of confession when there was an imperative call for speaking of it, is a positive argument against confession. In reality, neither Jesus Christ nor the apostles omitted any of the conditions necessary for the remission of sins: now, since they mentioned all the rest, and did not mention confession, it is clear that this condition is excluded. When the Bible tells us that by every other mode than confession to a priest we obtain from God the remission of sins, it absolutely excludes confession. Therefore not only is the Bible not in favour of confession as it is practised in the Roman Church, but it is absolutely opposed to it.

CHAPTER IV.

ANSWERS TO THE REASONS OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, AND OF CARDINAL BELLARMINE.

IN announcing some of its doctrines, the Council of Trent showed itself prudent enough: an anathema, and nothing else, is all the reason that these reverend men gave for their decision. But, in defining the dogma of confession, they have shown themselves more generous: they have given us the reasons on which they built; they have condescended to discussion. We may, therefore, without failing in respect to the Council, examine its reasons; it is no longer a question of submission, but of logic. If these reasons are conclusive, we must receive them; if they are not, even the most sincere Catholic may say, "I do not despise your authority; but when you would convince me with reasons, I have the right to examine them." Let us, therefore, hear the reasons of the Council.

In the preface to Sess. xiv. the Tridentine Fathers propose not only to give a more exact and com-

plete definition of what relates to the sacrament of penitence; but they propose, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to demonstrate and eradicate every error, and render Catholic truth, as they say, clear and perspicuous. After such a preface, it seems that the Council desires to produce its very strongest arguments in proof of its doctrine. Let us see, then, how it has succeeded,

"The sacrament of penance," it says in chap. i., "was instituted by God, that the benefit of the death of Christ might be applied to those who have sinned after baptism; because it is necessary to all men who have polluted themselves with any mortal sin, in order that they may recover grace and righteousness." Here the Council asserts three things: 1. That the sacrament of penance was instituted by God; 2. That it applies the benefit of the death of Christ to sinners; 3. That it is necessary at all times for the recovery of grace. But these are assertions: let us hear the proofs.

Four passages of the Bible are quoted by the Council of Trent in proof of its assertions; and we will transcribe them according to the version of Martini: "Turn ye, and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezek. xviii. 30); "Unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish in the same manner" (Luke xiii. 3); "Do penance, and be

baptized every one of you" (Acts ii. 38); Jesus Christ "breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained" (John xx. 22, 23). Since we have spoken of the last passage in the previous chapter, we will now speak of the other three.

Does it not seem to you, readers, that it would have been a more prudent course for these reverend men if they had been content to fulminate a good batch of anathemas against whoever declined to accept their word, rather than assign such reasons? And observe, they are not the reasons of a fallible theologian, but of an infallible council,—of the whole Roman theology congregated at Trent—of the whole body of the Roman Church. Well, twist and turn these passages as you will, put on them what sense you will, and see whether you succeed in maintaining by their means the three propositions which the Council would fain prove by them: namely, that the sacrament of penance was instituted by God; that it applies to the sinner the benefit of the death of Christ; that it is necessary for recovering grace when it is lost.

The Deity blinds those who would make merchandise of His sublime religion. In the same chapter these reverend men affirm that Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of penance after His resurrection; that

it is for sins committed after baptism; and then they quote me a passage of Ezekiel, one of St. Luke before the death of Christ, and one of St. Peter, who speaks to those who are not yet baptized. If I were to quote in the same manner, you would hear fine declamations from your preachers, and with good reason; but it is their own Council; it is the wisdom of Rome that quotes thus; and then all goes well!

What, in fact, do these three passages prove for the sacrament of penance? The passage of Ezekiel proves nothing to the purpose. The Lord is addressing the Jews; hence He could not speak to them either of the sacrament of penance or of confession. This is evident enough, without entering into a philological discussion * unintelligible to the people, and showing that the Vulgate and Martini have mistranslated the passage. The quotation from the Gospel of St. Luke in like manner proves none of the three conclusions that the Tridentine Fathers wished to prove. In it the Lord speaks to the Jews, and says, "Unless ye

* That there is the widest difference between the ecclesiastical act of "doing penance" and the total change of mind and feeling involved in the Greek word for repentance, is beyond dispute. Yet the perversion in Martini's Italian version is continued in the Rheims Testament for English Roman Catholics (Dublin, 1837). For instance, Acts ii. 38 is translated, "Do penance, and be baptized." But where was the time for doing penance, if they were baptized to the number of three thousand on the same day? (ver. 41.) The same and many similar

repent," and not, as Martini has it, "Unless ye do penance." But even granting that it ought to be translated as Martini translates, would the passage prove that the sacrament of penance was instituted by God?—that it is the application of the death of Christ?—that it is necessary for sins after baptism? We appeal to the common sense of the people, whether there is found there any one of the three things that the Council pretends to find there. The same must be said of the passage taken from the Acts of the Apostles. Such are the texts of the Bible which the Tridentine Fathers adduce to bring to light and eradicate every error, and render Catholic truth clear and perspicuous.

The Council of Trent, in citing the Bible in proof of its confession, makes a horrible confusion between Judaism, or *the Law*, and the Gospel. These two things the Bible separates in such a manner that it is impossible for a Christian to confound them: it calls the one shadow, the other substance; the one

corruptions are introduced into the French Testament of Mons, 1684, and repeated in the Bordeaux Testament of 1686, of which fifty thousand copies were printed by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, at the recommendation of the "candid" Bossuet, for the conversion of French Protestants.—Cramp, *Text-Book of Popery*, pp. 58, sq.: Lond., 1841; Mendham, *Literary Policy of Rome*, Append., pp. 357-8: Lond., 1830; Bishop Kidder, *Reflections on a French Testament*, etc.: Lond., 1827.—[*T.*]

a ministration of death, the other a ministration of life; the one a law of bondage, the other a law of liberty; and all this that it may be impossible to confound them. The law is a hammer in the hands of God to break the rock in pieces (Jer. xxiii. 29); it is the schoolmaster that brings us to Christ; the law makes known to us God's just condemnation of the sinner; it convinces all of sin, and of having deserved eternal damnation. Hence the struggle of man to seek by repentance, by expiations, by works, to flee from condemnation; and such a struggle is the effect of the natural unbelief of the unregenerate heart, which will not recognise in the law the schoolmaster who had the mission to bring it to Christ. But while the unregenerate man struggles, the law saith, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (Deut. xxvii. 26); but the Word of God, who cannot err, declares that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God" (Rom. iii. 20), that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Hence repentance under the law was a good thing; and although it justified not, it gave the knowledge of sin and of infirmity, and thus, as a schoolmaster, led to the Saviour.

But, since the Gospel, the case is widely different; the Gospel shows us that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). The Gospel shows us Christ, "*the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.*" If the law, then, giving us the knowledge of sin, makes known to us our condemnation, the Gospel points to Jesus Christ as the one *sole and perfect* Saviour. The two dispensations, then, being different, ought not to be confounded. And this appears to us so evident, that we cannot understand how the Council, without resorting to bad faith, could have confounded them for the sake of proving its penance.

Next, to prove auricular confession, the Council is more prudent: it cites no passage from the Bible, but contents itself with reasoning by induction. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," it says (sess. xiv., c. 5), "before He ascended into heaven, left His vicars, the priests, as presidents and judges, to whom all the mortal sins into which Christians might fall were to be carried; that, by the power of the keys, they might pronounce sentence of remission or of retention. For it is evident that the priests could not exercise such a judgment without understanding the case, nor could they inflict penalties with equity, if the sins were only

disclosed generally, and not specifically and severally. From which circumstances it ensues that the penitent is bound to confess all mortal sins," etc.

This reasoning of the Council proves that these reverend men were unable to find in the whole New Testament a single passage to support the doctrine which in their preface they proposed to demonstrate. The argumentation of the Council, after this pompous prelude, proves that they admit that auricular confession is not to be found in the Gospel.

But let us examine the reasoning of the Council, and see whether the consequence which it elicits in favour of confession is rightly deduced from the principle which it lays down as the base of its argument. The Council makes confession a dogma of faith: now, Cardinal Bellarmine asserts that a dogma must either be revealed in the Bible, or else must be *evidently* deduced from it.* Adopting this principle, which does not proceed from a Protestant, but from their greatest enemy, we ask, is the dogma of confession evidently deduced from the biblical premisses? Any one may decide who has not taken leave of common sense. The premisses of the Council are not Biblical: nay, they are false; and false there-

* *Nihil est de fide, nisi quod Deus per apostolos et prophetas revelavit, aut quod evidenter inde deducitur.—De Justific.*, lib. iii., cap. 8.

fore must the conclusion be. What, in fact, are the premisses of the Council? "Jesus Christ, before He ascended into Heaven, left the priests as His vicars." But pray, where in the world is it thus written? A single passage of the New Testament would satisfy us. But in the New Testament we find, as we have demonstrated in our essay on the Mass, that in Christianity One alone is Priest—Jesus Christ: hence there are no other priests whom He has left as His vicars. Besides, the Gospel states very distinctly that Jesus Christ is Head of the Church, *as the husband is the head of the wife* (Eph. v.). This most true similitude, as given by the Holy Spirit, excludes all idea of vicar or vicars. Finally, the Roman Church maintains that its Pope is the vicar of Jesus Christ; and were any priest whatever to profess himself to be vicar of Christ, if he were in Rome, he would have to render an account to the Inquisition for such a pretension.* The premiss therefore is false—1. Because it is not in the Bible; 2. Because it contradicts itself.

But the premiss does not finish here; it asserts that Jesus Christ has appointed these His pretended priests and vicars to be "presidents and judges." This part of the premiss also is foreign to the Bible, and contrary to the Bible. Let but a single

* See App. E.

passage be cited in proof of this presidentship and magistracy over conscience; and we will, in the meantime, quote some of the titles which the Bible gives to ministers. It calls them ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1), ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. v. 20), presbyters, stewards, dispensers, bishops, evangelists, ministers of God, of Christ, of the Gospel, of the Word, of the Church—pastors, servants in the Church, etc.; and we defy any one to find in the New Testament a single passage which declares them to be presidents and judges. Therefore on this point also the premiss of the Council is destitute of foundation, and is false. Moreover, the Bible, to demonstrate more evidently the falsehood of such premiss of the Council, affirms distinctly that Christ alone is Judge. The obligation, therefore, of carrying every sin to the priests is a chimera: all men, priests not excepted, will have to lay their offences at the feet of the only Judge, Jesus Christ, whom God has ordained.

The other part of the premiss, referring to the power of the keys, is equally false. Having spoken of it above, we deem it useless to return to it. An argument, therefore, such as that of the Council of Trent, being based on a false foundation, can only yield a false conclusion; therefore, with the good leave of the Fathers of Trent, we conclude that their

reasons to prove the obligation of confession, prove nothing more than the absolute inability of the Council to maintain that doctrine with any kind of conclusive argument.

Cardinal Bellarmine, however, is not content with the reasons adduced by the Council in proof of confession, but seeks for others in the Bible. Let us see if the cardinal is more fortunate. He quotes certain words picked out here and there in chap. v. of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and he culls them where he can, purposely to distort the sense. Let us quote as Bellarmine does (*De Pœnit.*, lib. iii., cap. 4): "He has given us the ministry of reconciliation, and He placed in us the word of reconciliation: therefore let us exercise the office of ambassadors for Christ." From this passage, thus maltreated, Bellarmine derives this consequence: that as the ambassadors of a king, commissioned to bring his enemies to a reconciliation, cannot execute their office properly without knowing the delinquencies of the criminals by their own confession; so the priests, ambassadors of Christ, cannot absolve without having heard confession.

How false this argument is, even as a matter of argument alone, is obvious to every one. When the king grants an amnesty, to accept it is enough, without the necessity of confessing to the king's

ministers how, when, where, and how many times the law was broken. But, further, it is in its basis that this reasoning offends in the highest degree: Bellarmine garbles the words of St. Paul; and, to extract the consequences he desires, makes him say what he does not say. Let us quote the actual text of St. Paul: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, *as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 17—21). From reading this passage two things result: 1. The fraud of Cardinal Bellarmine in quoting the Bible; 2. The true sense of this passage—that it is God, and not His ambassadors, that reconciles us by Jesus Christ. They are not to absolve, nor to hear confessions, but *act as ambassadors and exhort.* And the embassy and exhortation consist in this: "*Be ye reconciled to*

God." What, then, has this passage to do with auricular confession?

A second passage quoted by Bellarmine is the following: "Confess your faults one to another." And here the most learned theologian stops short, to have it believed that St. James in this passage recommends auricular confession as already instituted, and now in use. All we shall do is to quote the whole passage of St. James, that it may be seen with what good faith Roman theologians quote the Bible. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The righteous man's intercession, made with earnestness, availeth much" (James v. 16). There needs a marvellous effrontery to affirm that St. James meant to say, "You laymen, confess your sins to a priest, and he will absolve you." Whom is St. James addressing, priests or laymen? He is addressing all Christians; and would have every one, when he has offended his brother, confess his fault, that they may pray for each other in times of need; which is according to the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The last passage quoted by Cardinal Bellarmine in proof of confession to a priest, is taken from 1 John i. 9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Nothing short of the

microscope of a cardinal theologian will suffice to detect in this passage confession to a priest. St. John is establishing the principle that "the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God" (not confession) "cleanses us from all sin." But to obtain this cleansing we have to acknowledge ourselves to be sinners; we have to go with sincerity and confess to Him our trespasses; otherwise we make God a liar, He having said that we are all sinners. Read from ver. 7 to ver. 10, and Bellarmine's falsehood will be exposed. Behold the mighty reasons extracted from the Bible by the Tridentine Fathers and the greatest theologian of the Roman Church, in favour of confession!

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST AGES IS OPPOSED TO AURICULAR CONFESSION.

BUT surely the Roman Church, if unable to allege the Word of God in favour of its dogma of confession, will at least be able to boast of the usage of the ancient Church! To hearken to its theologians, auricular confession was in use as early as the apostolic times, and they have all but thrust their confessional boxes into the supper-chamber of the Lord. But these are no longer the times for imposture by means of audacity; let the history of the Church, not the babblings of theologians, be our guide in search of truth.

Two most powerful arguments demonstrate that the Church of the first ages knew no other confession than what continues in use in our times among Protestants, as we alleged in Chap. I. of this essay. The first argument we derive from facts; the second from the testimony of the so-called Fathers of the Church. Let us commence with facts.

It is an incontestable fact that of the holy Fathers, from Clement of Rome to Bernard of Clairvaux, not one ever confessed, even at the point of death; and although some of them, as Cyprian and Augustine, for instance, died excommunicated by the Pope, yet not even at the point of death did they seek a priest to confess themselves, and receive absolution.* And here let us observe the variation and self-contradiction of the Roman Church in its doctrines: in our times these Fathers not only could not have been canonized, but could not even have had ecclesiastical burial, because they died voluntarily unconfessed

* Persons who are intimately acquainted with ecclesiastical history will not be at all astonished at these facts; but they who have not pursued these studies will be amazed at learning that two saints, two great doctors, two bishops, died excommunicated, and yet are saints. Let Roman theologians explain, if they will, how an excommunicated person can be recognised for a saint: we will confine ourselves to establishing the fact of the excommunication.

St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, maintained that heretics ought to be rebaptized. Stephen, bishop of Rome, maintained the contrary. Both being theologians, each adhered stubbornly to his own opinion, till at last Stephen excommunicated Cyprian. The latter, however, refused to submit, and continued to maintain his opinion to the last. Thus he died in a state of Papal excommunication, and in spite of it is a saint. This fact is attested by every historian.

In a few words here is the excommunication of St. Augustine. In the year 418 a great council was held at Carthage: it is the sixth council of that city. More than 200 bishops composed the

and excommunicated. And yet in those times they were saints; and not only saints, but fathers and doctors of the Church. But what security have we, I may be asked, that these holy Fathers died unconfessed? History, I reply.

A single observation on history will evidence this truth to demonstration. From the fourth Lateran Council downwards you will find in all the lives of the saints the practice of auricular confession repeated to satiety: you will see that these saints,

council, Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, being the president. Among these bishops was St. Augustine. Pope Zosimus had sent his legates there to maintain his pretensions to the primacy, quoting a canon of the Nicene Council. The Fathers of Carthage discovered that the canon was spurious, and the Papal legates returned to Rome thoroughly disgraced. By that time Pope Zosimus was dead, and his successor, Boniface I., not having a plausible answer to make, excommunicated Aurelius of Carthage and the whole sixth council in a lump. These bishops, among whom was St. Augustine, laughed at the excommunication, which was not cancelled till about a century afterwards, when all were dead. The Act of this excommunication, like so many other documents, has disappeared; but in the second volume of the Councils there is a letter from Boniface II. to Eulalius, bishop of Alexandria, where this fact is attested. In speaking of the sixth council of Carthage Boniface II. declares that "*Aurelius cum collegis suis, instigante diabolo, superbire cœpit*" (Aurelius with his colleagues, at the instigation of the devil, began to give himself airs); and, therefore, with all his colleagues, among whom was St. Augustine, was excommunicated.

especially at the approach of death, confessed every day, and even several times a day; * whilst in the lives of the saints previous to that Council, confession is never named. Let us open the celebrated 'Lives of the Holy Fathers in the Desert.' St. Paul, the first hermit, remained in the desert for about ninety years, and saw no one; at the point of death he saw St. Anthony, but did not confess to him, not only because the story does not mention it, but because St. Anthony was a layman; therefore, for

* Luther, before his release from his Babylonian captivity, is well known to have confessed once a day; Bernardino Ochino, once, and sometimes twice (Benrath, *Life of B. Ochino*, ch. iii., p. 87). Henrietta Caracciolo, herself a nun before the liberation of Italy, describes the whole existence of nuns as so concentrated in confession, that were it abolished, no legislative enactment would be requisite for the dissolution of convents. Two or three hours consecutively will they sit with their confessors, sometimes three times a day, with an interchange of notes to relieve the weariness of the interval (*Memoirs of H. Caracciolo*, ch. viii., pp. 87, 88, 102). When it is considered that, besides the ordinary confessor, a nun enjoys the privilege of having an extraordinary one of her own selection, and, by alleging indisposition, can receive him in her own cell at pleasure, it will be seen that there are at least as many dangers for young ladies within convent walls as without them. The fruits of the system —and they are inconceivably horrible—may be seen in De Potter's *Vie et Mémoires de Ricci, Evêque de Pistoie et Prato*; which every mother who thinks of consigning a daughter to a nunnery ought to read, but not confess that she has read, if she can avoid it.—[*T.*]

ninety years he never confessed, and died without confession. Mary of Egypt, a most notorious sinner, went to the desert, and lived there many years without seeing a living soul. At the approach of death, says the history, God sent to her St. Zosimus, a priest, to give her the holy communion; and he administered it without confessing her. Therefore she also was a saint without confessing her sins, grievous as they were, though she had an opportunity of doing so. In like manner, not to be diffuse, of no one of these hermits is it recorded that he ever confessed; therefore confession was not yet in use.

Pontius, the deacon, writes the life of St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, with the greatest minuteness of detail; no act, word, or thought of his hero does he omit; and yet, while he relates the whole of his episcopal occupations, never does he say that he attended to hearing the confessions of the faithful. St. Cyprian died under the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him by Pope Stephen; it was therefore necessary for his salvation, according to the principles of the Roman Church, that he should have confessed and received absolution. Had Cyprian done so, his historian would not have failed to relate it; yet not a word have we from Pontius referring in the most remote degree to the confession of Cyprian. Neither, therefore, did Cyprian receive

the confession of others, nor confess himself to a priest.

Gregory of Nyssa writes the life of St. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, with the greatest possible exactitude; he describes his actions most minutely; and never do we find the bishop engaged in listening to the confessions of others, or in making his own to a priest—not even at the point of death.

Gregory of Nazianzum observes the same silence in composing the biography of the Bishops Athanasius and Basil. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, is equally silent in the life of his master, St. Ambrose. Sulpicius Severus, who wrote the history of St. Martin of Tours, does not even name confession, though he describes the minutest actions of his hero. Palladius and Theodoretus, writers in whom implicit trust may be reposed, not only do not allege, in the life of St. John Chrysostom, that their hero confessed, or heard the confessions of others; but, on the contrary, they detail the reasons which induced Chrysostom to oppose confession to a priest, which was beginning at that time to creep in, as we shall see. Possidius, writing the life of St. Augustine, observes the same silence; and thus could we multiply quotations to infinitude, to demonstrate with these facts, that not one of the Fathers of the first ages of the Church heard the confessions of others, or made his own.

Therefore we defy the priests of the Roman Church to cite a single fact proving that any one of these so-called primitive Fathers of the Church listened to the confessions of others, or confessed himself.

Let us pass on now to the second argument, referring to the testimony rendered by the Fathers to the doctrine of the Church in their time with respect to confession to a priest.

Tertullian, in his book on Repentance (chap. x.), defines confession in the same manner as it is defined by Protestants; and the doctrine of this Father respecting confession does not diverge in the slightest degree from ours. "The confession of sins," says Tertullian, "is that whereby we acknowledge our sin to our Lord, not as to one who does not know it; but inasmuch as confessing disposes to satisfaction, from that confession penitence arises, and with penitence God is propitiated." * Hence, according to Tertullian, confession of sins to God is alone necessary to obtain forgiveness; wherefore Tertullian excludes confession to a priest.

St. Ambrose, in his tenth book on the Gospel of St. Luke, speaks of the repentance of St. Peter,

* "*Exomologesis est, qua delictum Domino nostro confitemur, non quidem ut ignaro, sed quatenus satisfactio confessione disponitur, confessione pœnitentia nascitur, pœnitentia Deus mitigatur.*"—Tertull., *De Pœnit.*, cap x.

excluding the confession of his sin. "Peter," he says, "repented, and wept; for he sinned as a man. I do not find it written that he said anything; I find that he wept. I read of his tears, not of his satisfaction." * St. Ambrose, therefore, deemed that repentance alone, without confession, sufficed to obtain forgiveness of sins.

One solitary fact we have which proves the existence of confession to a priest in the early Church; but this fact, instead of establishing anything in favour of confession, as practised in the Roman Church, proves the exact contrary. Here is the fact as reported by the most celebrated ecclesiastical historians, Socrates,† Sozomenus,‡ and Nicephorus Calistus.§ Eusebius never speaks of confession, because in his time it was not yet introduced.

It was in the great cities that was first introduced the practice of having in the church a priest especially intended to hear the confessions of the faithful. Shortly after the introduction of such an abuse the priest was discarded, and that kind of confession was abolished. And this is how

* "*Petrus doluit, et flevit, quia erravit ut homo. Non invenio quid dixerit, invenio quod fleverit: lacrimas ejus lego, satisfactionem non lego.*"—Ambros. *in Luc.*, lib. x.

† H. E., l. v., c. 19. ‡ Ib., l. vii., c. 16. § Ib., l. xii., c. 28.

it came to pass: we will use the very words of Socrates.

"At the same time" (the year 383) "it was determined to abolish the priests who presided over penitence in the churches, and this for the following reason. After the Novatians had seceded from the Church through unwillingness to hold communion with those who had apostatized in the persecution of Decius, the bishops added a penitentiary priest to the ecclesiastical register, that they who had sinned after baptism might confess their sins to the priest established for that object. And this institution continues still among the other sects. The Homousians * alone, and the Novatians, who are of the same creed, have rejected the penitentiary priest. In fact, the Novatians from the beginning refused to accept this addition. But the Homousians, who now have possession of the churches, having for some time preserved this institution, finally abrogated it in the time of Bishop Nectarius, on occasion of an offence committed in the Church." Here Socrates goes on to describe the delinquency which gave occasion to the decree for the abolition of confession. The following was the offence :—

* Those were called Homousians, or Consubstantialists, who had accepted the definition of the Nicene Council respecting the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A lady of Constantinople of noble rank confessed to having gone wrong with a deacon of that Church. The fact, imparted under the seal of confession, was soon divulged; the deacon was cashiered; the people rose against the clergy as corruptors of honourable matrons. Then a certain priest named Eudemon persuaded Bishop Nectarius to abolish the penitentiary priest, and ordain that every one should come to communion, guided by his own conscience.

The fact is sufficiently clear in itself to explain the origin of confession, and how it was abolished, as not being deemed necessary: nevertheless it will not be inexpedient to make some reflections on this fact.

In the first place, the truth of the fact, which is related by three historians of great weight and authority, is such that the Roman Church has never ventured to deny it. We have therefore in this controversy the advantage that the Roman Church cannot deny the consequences, so far as they are fairly deducible from a fact which cannot be disputed. Let the public, then, judge of our logic.

First consequence: Confession was not obligatory on all offenders. One priest alone was assigned to hear confessions; now, is it conceivable that one confessor alone sufficed to hear the confessions of the whole of that enormous city, Constantinople?

Wherefore it was only in extraordinary cases that people went to him; and those only went who were so inclined. This priest only heard confessions in the church: now we must remember that in those times the churches were only open during divine service; visits to the sacrament were not then made in the churches; there were no madonnas, nor saints, nor relics to adore; there were no three-day nor nine-day ceremonies, nor private masses; but people only went to church in the days and hours of public worship; hence the time allowed to the penitentiary for hearing confessions is still more curtailed; and the impossibility of hearing the confessions of all the Christians in a most populous city is still more clearly demonstrated.* Therefore confession was free, and not compulsory.

Second consequence: From the fact in question it results that confession is neither of Divine, nor of apostolical institution; for it was instituted, as Socrates states, in the time and on the occasion of the Novatians; but the Novatians did not come upon the scene till after the middle of the third century; so that for two centuries and a half all Christians died without confession; therefore it was

* In one small Jesuit chapel in Brussels there are twenty confessionals.—Roussel, *Catholic and Protestant Nations*, p. 283.—[*T.*]

not necessary to salvation; therefore the infallible definition of the Council of Trent, that auricular confession is necessary to salvation, is false.

From which two first consequences, and from the mode of expression used by Socrates, it seems to be clearly deducible, that confession was instituted for the sin of apostasy alone. For we have already observed that a single confessor in a very great city could only suffice for some one offence of no great frequency. We have observed that it was instituted at the time of the dispute between the general Church and the Novatians; because the latter would not communicate with those who had apostatized in the persecution: it seems, therefore, that the general Church, by way of conciliation, made the addition of confession for the sin of apostasy. This conjecture is confirmed by the expression used by Socrates, who states that confession was instituted for the *lapsed* (fallen) after their baptism. Now the word *lapsed*, though a general term, only signified at that time fall by apostasy; therefore confession was only for apostates.

Fourth consequence: Socrates tells us that in his time (the fifth century) confession was retained among heretics alone. Therefore, in the fifth century confession was a sign of heresy; and if it was such then, how has it since become a sign of true

Christianity? How have they who do not recognise confession to a priest as necessary to salvation subsequently become heretics? But of such metamorphoses the Roman Church is full; almost all the doctrines which it has added to the Gospel were the inventions of heretics, and impugned by the Fathers.

Fifth consequence: Socrates tells us that the doctrine of confession is an adscititious doctrine; for the Novatians from the very first did not admit of this supplement: ("*nam Novatiani ne initio quidem supplementum hoc admiserunt*"). Hence the doctrine of confession is not the doctrine of the Bible, is not the doctrine of the apostles, is not the doctrine of the first ages of the Church; but it is a subsequent adjunct; therefore it is neither of divine nor of apostolic institution; therefore it is not necessary to salvation.

Sixth consequence: Confession was abolished towards the close of the fourth century, by Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople; therefore it was believed to be a thing indifferent. The Church, which in those times had held so many councils to know whether the *lapsed* (the apostates) ought or ought not to be admitted to communion, to know on what day Easter ought to be celebrated, whether heretics ought or ought not to be rebaptized—would not

that Church have held a council to know whether confession ought to be abolished, had she not believed it a thing totally indifferent, such as did not deserve the trouble of being discussed in a council? Had there been the least doubt respecting its necessity, could a bishop have thus abolished it without incurring the censure of his colleagues? and would the Pope, who excommunicated Cyprian because he maintained it to be necessary to re-baptize heretics, have remained silent when Nectarius, of his own authority, abolished confession?

Seventh consequence: The reason for which it was abolished was its abuse by a confessor; but this reason would not have been sufficient, if confession had been believed to be—we will not say necessary—but at all events, useful; it would have sufficed to remove that priest from his office, and put another in his place. The abolition of confession, therefore, for this reason, indicates that no one at that time thought it either necessary to salvation, or useful to the faithful.

Eighth consequence: The reasons for abolishing confession were the indiscretion of the penitentiary who violated the seal of secrecy, and the detriment which accrued to the clergy from the discovery of the immorality of one of their number; therefore the Church asserts and abolishes doctrines according

to the advantage or disadvantage it derives from them; and if the conduct of the bishop of Constantinople ought to be imitated in our time, how often ought confession to have been abolished!

Ninth consequence: The whole Church re-echoed the decree of Nectarius; and following his example, the bishops universally concurred in abolishing confessions: therefore the entire Church was persuaded that auricular confession was not only not of Divine institution, but neither necessary nor useful. And in this fact, admitted even by the Roman Church, we have a clear demonstration of what was the doctrine of the Church to the close of the fourth century, respecting the necessity of auricular confession.

The fifth century is opened by John, surnamed Chrysostom, a holy doctor of the Roman Church, although a declared enemy of auricular confession. Some passages of this doctor will convince us of his doctrine, which ought to be considered as the doctrine of the Catholic Church of that time, Chrysostom being both saint, and doctor, and father of that Church, recognized and venerated as such by the Roman Church itself.

In his twenty-first homily to the people of Antioch, in speaking of the remission of sins, Chrysostom positively excludes confession. Here are his words: " Not only is it a matter worthy of

all admiration, that God forgives our sins, but that He forgives without obliging us to reveal them ; He obliges us only to render an account to Himself, and to make confession to Him. . . . While He remits sins, He does not oblige us to disclose them to any one ; but one thing alone does He require—that he who enjoys the benefit of remission should understand the greatness of the gift. How can one help calling it an absurdity, that while He who confers so great a benefit is content with the sole testimony of our consciences, we, on the contrary, as it were out of ostentation, should seek the testimony of others ?" Is it possible to protest with greater clearness against auricular confession ?

Yet Chrysostom does speak with still greater distinctness, that he may not leave the least doubt that his doctrine is totally opposed to auricular confession. In his thirtieth homily, which is the fifth on the incomprehensible nature of God, he speaks thus : " For which cause I exhort and entreat you—confess frequently, and with earnestness, but to God. I do not bring thee before the multitude of thy brethren, nor constrain thee to disclose thy sins to men. Unfold thy conscience before God, and to Him lay bare thy wounds, and from Him ask healing medicines ; reveal thyself to Him who upbraids not, but heals. Although thou art silent

He will understand everything: manifest thyself, therefore, for thine own gain; manifest thyself to Him, that laying down thy burden, thou mayest return from thence pure and innocent, and be delivered from the intolerable revelations of the last day." Is this the auricular confession of the Roman Church? Is it not rather the confession practised by evangelical Christians?

But let us advance still farther in the interesting doctrine of Chrysostom respecting confession. In his ninth homily, on penitence, commenting on the passage of David (Psalm li.), "Against Thee only have I sinned," he speaks thus: "To God alone, then, manifest thy sin, and it will be forgiven thee." And in the second homily on Psalm li. (in the Vulgate l.), he says, "Confess thy transgressions, that they may be blotted out. But what? Art thou ashamed, perhaps, to say thou hast sinned? Say it every day in thy prayers. I do not tell thee to disclose them to a brother who would upbraid thee: manifest them to God, who pardons thee." I do not understand how clearer language could be used for the absolute exclusion of confession to a priest.

In the fourth homily, on Lazarus, he reproves those who do not make their confession to God; and he rests on this argument, that sins ought not to be told to a man, but solely to God. "And

why, then," are his words, "why be ashamed and blush at confessing thy sins? Is it because thou tellest them to a man who chides thee for them? For thou confessest them not to a brother who may divulge them; but to Him who is God, who cares for thee, who is merciful, and who heals; to Him lay bare thy wounds."

In the fifty-eighth homily he says: "Let God alone see thee when thou confessest,—God, who does not upbraid, but forgiveth sins which are confessed to Him." In the sixty-eighth homily he says: "Hast thou sinned? Well, say unto God, 'I have sinned.' What hardship is there in this? Is it a long business, a laborious business? What difficulty is there in pronouncing these words, 'I have sinned'? . . . Hast thou sinned? Well, enter the church; say unto God, 'I have sinned.' Nothing else than this alone do I require of thee."

But still more clearly does he exclude all idea of confession to a priest, in the twenty-eighth homily on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, where he obviates the objection that might be raised by the advocates of confession: an objection taken from ver. 28 of chap. xi. of the Epistle; an objection which Roman theologians din into our ears so loudly at the present day: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread,

and drink of that cup." Which words are thus explained by Chrysostom: "Therefore he says, 'Let a man examine *himself*.' He did not ordain that one man should examine another, but that each should examine himself, making it a secret, and not a public, trial; and that he should examine himself without a witness." Could confession to a priest be more expressly excluded?

Only one more passage of Chrysostom, and we will close this chapter, not out of want of further testimonies, but to avoid being too diffuse. In the thirty-first homily on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, he says thus: "I do not tell thee to bring thy transgressions before the public, as on the stage; nor do I bid thee go and arraign them before another; but I counsel thee to obey the prophet, who says, 'Reveal thy life unto the Lord;' confess thy transgressions to thy God, confess them to thy Judge, praying, if not with thy tongue, at least with thy memory; and thus wilt thou obtain mercy."

From the testimony of Chrysostom and of the other ancient Fathers* against auricular confession

* Abundance of passages of the same kind are to be seen in Suicer, *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, s. v., Ἐξομολόγησις; Usher, *Answer to a Jesuit*, ch. iv., pp. 77, sq., Camb. 1835; Riddle, *Christian Antiquities*, bk. iv., ch. iv., pp. 582,'3, Lond. 1839; Boyd, *The Fathers not Papists*, pp. 176,'7, 186; Gibson, *Preservative*, vol. x., pp. 173, 190.—[*T.*]

we might derive a clear proof of the contradictions of the Roman Church, when it would have it believed that auricular confession is proved from the tradition of the Fathers. The Fathers of the first ages, far from favouring the doctrine of confession, as taught by the Lateran and Tridentine Councils, were absolutely opposed to such an innovation.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPLANATIONS OF CERTAIN PASSAGES OF THE FATHERS RESPECTING CONFESSION.

THE advocates of auricular confession rely strongly on certain passages of the Fathers of the ancient Church to support their idol. The Christian might reply that not the writings of the Fathers, but the Gospel, is his religious code; that he shall not be judged by the writings of the Fathers, but by the Gospel. Nevertheless, for the sake of those who are in the Roman Church, or have recently come out of it, we are unwilling to disguise the fact that the argument derived from antiquity is of great weight, and the Roman theologians know how to manipulate it adroitly. It may not, therefore, be unacceptable to our readers if we pause for a while to examine some passages of the Fathers which prove the usages of the ancient Church with respect to confession—passages which the Roman theologians claim, with unparalleled audacity, for their own doctrine.

Certain theologues come forward with a passage of Clement of Rome to prove the existence of auricular confession in the time of the apostles; but, beside the fact that this passage would be no great proof in favour of auricular confession, it is taken from the first epistle of Clement "To James the brother of the Lord, Bishop of Bishops, and ruling the holy Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem." Cardinal Baronius* himself rejects with contempt these spurious letters of Clement; and Father Labbé, who produces them, remarks that they are such silly, trashy stuff, that no art whatever could give them the appearance of being genuine. It would, therefore, only be loss of time to dwell any longer on the pretended authority of Clement of Rome. But let this serve to expose the effrontery of certain theologians in citing as honest ware a letter so palpably spurious. Let it serve as a useful lesson to teach us how chary we ought to be of giving credence to a Roman theologian.

They adduce a passage taken from the ninth chapter of the first book of Irenæus, in which certain women are spoken of, who, having been seduced by Marcus, a heretic, made their confession in the church with wailings and lamentations. But let us produce the words of Irenæus as they are quoted by

* *Ad. an.* 530, n. 5.

Bellarmine *: "These female converts confessed to the Church of God that they had been seduced, and inflamed with love for him, and that they had loved him greatly." This passage, of which the Roman Church vaunts so loudly, is no proof whatever of its auricular confession. The matter in question here is a public confession which these women were disposed to make—a confession which was made to *the Church of God*, not to a priest. A man is spoken of who, affecting a reputation for sanctity, had seduced two women, and afterwards was discovered to be a heretic: the affair seems to have received publicity. Now, who can allow any weight to the *devotions* of two women in such a case? Did they do wrong? We do not venture to assert it. Did they confess secretly to the priest? Assuredly not. They confessed to *the Church of God;* and a priest is certainly not the Church of God.

But Cardinal Bellarmine, perceiving the weakness of this proof, adduces another of the same Irenæus, concerning another woman, who, "after much trouble, being finally converted by *the brethren* (the Christians), spent all her time in *exomologesis*, bewailing and lamenting the dishonour she had suffered from the magician." Here is another case of a woman whose error was publicly

* *De Pœnit.*, l. iii., c. 6.

exposed among the Christians. Neither in this place, then, is confession to a priest in question. Bellarmine, however, wishes to gain the victory at any cost; and not being able to find auricular confession in the fact, he seeks to find it in the interpretation of the Greek word *exomologesis*, which, according to him, means auricular confession; and, to prove it, with all the good faith of a Jesuit, he garbles a passage of Tertullian, to make it speak in his own favour: but in vain; for to us also Tertullian is accessible. We accept, then, the passage of Tertullian cited by Bellarmine to explain what it was that was called *exomologesis*. Tertullian, in chap. ix. of his book on Penitence, explains what exomologesis was. Here are his words, which Bellarmine mutilates in quoting: "Exomologesis is the discipline which is practised in humbling and subduing a man, enjoining such a mode of life as may win pity. This discipline prescribes even his food and raiment; his bed has to be sackcloth and ashes; ablutions are forbidden to the body; the mind must be overwhelmed with sorrow, and sinful pleasures exchanged for rigid self-mortification. He is, moreover, to eat and drink merely to sustain life, not to gratify the appetite: his prayers are often to be nourished by fasts; night and day is he to lament, weep, and wail to

the Lord his God, to throw himself at the feet of the elders, to clasp the knees of the beloved of God, and enjoin on all the brethren the charge of interceding for them. All these things are *exomologesis*."* But where, I pray, do we find auricular confession here? Tertullian describes the public penitence practised in the primitive Church; and if he says that these penitents threw themselves at the feet of the elders, he does not say that they did so to reveal their secret sins, but that the elders might pray for them. The *exomologesis*, then, of the ancient Church was not auricular confession, but the discipline observed in public penitence.

Whenever the words *penitence*, *confession*, *exomologesis* occur in any of the ancient Fathers, the theologians of the Roman Church, without stopping to enquire what is the subject treated of, take a flying shot, as we say, at the word, like skilful sportsmen, and raise a cry of victory, as if auricular

* "*Exomologesis prosternendi et humilificandi hominis disciplina est, conversationem injungens misericordiæ illicem. De ipso quoque habitu atque victu mandat, sacco et cineri incubare, corpus sordibus obscurare, animum mœroribus dejicere, illa quæ peccavit tristi tractatione mutare; cæterum pastum et potum pura nosse, non ventris scilicet, sed animi causa: plerumque vero jejuniis preces alere, ingemiscere, lacrimare, et mugire dies noctesque ad Dominum Deum suum, presbyteris advolvi, et caris Dei adgeniculari, omnibus fratribus legationes deprecationis suæ injungere; hæc omnia exomologesis.*"—Tertull. *De Pœnit.*, c. 9.

confession were the subject-matter of the passage. To understand the testimonies of the Fathers, it is necessary to be acquainted with the history and customs of the Church of those times : the Fathers used to exhort the faithful to preserve unimpaired the system of discipline which they had received. With this test let us examine some of the testimonies about which the Roman theologians raise such a mighty noise.

The confession of sin to God formed a part of the most ancient discipline: we find it established and practised even in the Old Testament (Lev. xvi. 21 ; Dan. ix. 4—19, etc.). We find it practised in the New Testament (Luke xviii. 13, etc.). It was in use in the primitive Church ; and a vestige of it, though adulterated and falsified, still remains in the so-called *Confiteor*. To this confession must be referred several passages of the ancient Fathers, who desired to commend the necessity of it ; thus Origen, in his first homily on Psalm xxxviii., says: "When sin has been committed, it must be confessed." Take these words alone, and they would not be out of place even on the lips of a modern priest ; but if you read on, you see that Origen explains his maxim by the example of David and the Publican, who confessed their sins, not to a priest, but to God, and received forgiveness after-

wards. He goes on thus: "The trespasses which I have committed in thought or deed I present before Thee, and in my prayers I place them in Thy sight; my groaning is not hidden before Thee." What is there here of auricular confession? Is it not evident that in saying, "When sin has been committed, it must be confessed," Origen alludes to confession addressed to God, which was habitually practised publicly in the congregation, and that he by no means refers to secret confession?

St. John Chrysostom, in his twentieth homily on Genesis, speaks thus: "He who acts thus, if he will hasten to confess his offences, and exhibit the wound to the physician, to be cured, and not to be irritated, and from him receive the remedy, and speak to him alone, telling it to no one else, and carefully impart to him all the facts, he will in that case easily cleanse his sins. For the confession of sins is the blotting out of iniquities." Roman theologians are in ecstasies when they confront us with this passage. In it they find the efficacy of confession—confession to a priest, secrecy, the number and the circumstances of the sins, and whatever else they wish for; but we, who do not read the Fathers to trade upon them, do not produce these words alone, but the explanations which Chrysostom gives immediately afterwards. He explains in the same homily that

the physician to whom the wound ought to be shown is not the priest, but God; and afterwards he says: "If Lamech was not ashamed to confess his misdeeds to his wives, how shall we be worthy of forgiveness if we refuse to confess them to Him who knows our most secret offences?" Such is the good faith of Roman theologians! Such is the manner in which they avail themselves of the writings of the Fathers!

Another kind of confession was in use in the ancient Church, and is likewise in accordance with the Bible. It is this. When a sinner, after some offence of deeper than usual dye, recognizes by the light of faith the heinousness of his iniquity, he not only confesses it before God, but if he has especially scandalized the brethren, confesses it likewise in the presence of the ministers of God, or to any worthy Christians, that his humiliation may be more complete, and that with them he may pray and implore the compassion of God—without, however, declaring either the number or the circumstances to a priest, who may either grant or refuse absolution at his own pleasure.

The Bible is full of such examples. Thus was the pardon of sins of ignorance or of error obtained under the ancient law (Lev. iv., v.); thus did David confess his sin (2 Sam. xii.); thus did the woman

in the Gospel who was a sinner confess (Luke vii.); thus did some of the primitive Christians confess to the apostles (Acts xix.). Of this confession St. Basil, in his "Brief Rules," speaks at Rule 229. Here are his words: "On the whole, in the enunciation and disclosure of our sins, the same method ought to be observed as in the exhibition of bodily sores. As men do not lightly exhibit their bodily sores to every one, but only to those who know how to heal them, so the revelation of sins ought to be made to those who can cure them." Roman theologians, with their customary good faith, here cut short the words of Basil, to create the belief that confession should be made to priests alone; but we, who have no wish to betray any one into error, will go on and transcribe some words of Basil which show of what confession he speaks. "And especially," he continues, "to those of whom it is written: '*Ye that are strong, bear the infirmities of the weak*'" (Rom. xv. 1); as much as to say, "Do away with them by your diligence and care." Again do we ask, Where do we find in this passage confession to a priest? The passage quoted from Basil proves to a demonstration that he speaks of a confession that ought not to be made lightly, and, as it were, in sport,* to the

* Mention of burlesque confessions and absolutions frequently occur in Roman Catholic writers. A not very edifying instance,

first comer, but that it ought to be made seriously, in the presence of those who are strong, and who know how to bear the infirmities of the weak. Besides, the passage cited from Basil cannot in any manner be interpreted of confession to a priest; the Romans to whom St. Paul wrote were not priests; they were, according to St. Basil, they who ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.

Many passages of the Fathers, which the theologians of the Roman Church apply as if they had been written of auricular confession, refer to public penitence, which, as every one knows, was practised in the primitive Church. To public penitence was added public confession—not for all sins, but only for public offences, or for those which, as Augustine says, although secret, deserved excommunication. A fervid temperament in some cases rose to such a height, that persons who had only harboured the thought of committing one of the offences for which public penitence was provided, for that thought alone presented themselves to the bishop or the presbyters, requesting to be admitted to public penitence and public confession. The bishops and priests, instead of rebuking this indiscreet zeal, encouraged it, and

but on which a Jesuit confessor prided himself highly, is recorded by Boucher (*Hist. des Jésuites*, p. 118), who refers for more minute details to Arnaud's *Morale Pratique*.—[*T.*]

thus paved the way to fill up the mystery of iniquity. Here is a passage of St. Cyprian in proof of it,—a passage which the Roman priests make use of to impose on the simple: "Those who have a more lively faith, or a more sensitive fear of God, though they may not have committed the offence of the passport or the sacrifice;* yet if they have only thought to commit it, go to the priest of God with all humility and sorrow to confess it. They make the *exomologesis* of their conscience; they display the burden of their souls; and for their wounds, however slight, they seek a remedy." At this passage of Cyprian's a cry of victory is raised by certain incautious disputants, who think to impose upon the world with the authority of the Fathers. Of what is Cyprian here speaking? Of the thought of committing the offence of the passport or the sacrifice; not, you will observe, of every thought or of every sin indifferently, but of the thought of an offence for

* The offence of the passport (*libellus*) was committed by those who, by money or other means, in time of persecution, provided themselves with a certificate, either from a magistrate or from the idol priests, to be exempt from persecution. The certificate declared that the bearer had satisfied the imperial laws in religious matters, and therefore there were no grounds for legal proceedings. But such pusillanimity was condemned by the Church, and they who were guilty of it were called *libellatici*, and subjected to public penitence. The offence of the sacrifice was having sacrificed to idols.

which public penance was provided. Not all who had committed such an offence went to confess it, but only those who had a *more lively faith*, or a *more sensitive fear of God;* therefore one might have faith, and fear God, without wishing to confess thoughts of that kind. Cyprian, therefore, does not speak of auricular confession, but of the mode of discipline in question.

Another passage on which Roman theologians set great store is from Origen, in the second homily on Psalm xxxviii. He speaks thus to the penitent: "Look round and see to whom you ought to confess your sin." (Do you not fancy you see a man in our days entering a Catholic church full of confessional-boxes?) "First approve of the physician; and if he shall understand and see distinctly that your transgression is such as ought to be exposed and treated in the assembly of the whole Church, for the edification of others and for your own cure, you will do so with the advice of a skilful physician." But, in the name of wonder, what does this passage prove in favour of auricular confession? Here Origen speaks of a particular sin, and not of the confession of sins in general: not a word is there here of confession to a priest. But if by that physician a priest is to be understood, be it so; it is not absolution that is spoken of, but merely the asking for advice,

whether this offence ought to be confessed publicly or not.

To understand properly what Origen intended in this place, let us consult history. For some very heinous and public offences the Church constrained offenders to public penitence and confession, but when such transgressions were not public, the Church could not compel the transgressors to confession. Some, however, of those who were guilty of such offences, either impelled by remorse or by the threats of the priest against the impenitent, came forward abruptly, as Origen says in the same homily, and without being authorized, made the *exomologesis*. Hence it ensued that many of the hearers were scandalized, others scoffed at the excessive fervour of these voluntary penitents, others harshly censured it. A public confession of this kind produced many disorders; and this is the reason why the Fathers ordained that before any one made a public confession, he should consult, with reference to his offence, some one of the more advanced Christians, that he might declare whether he judged that public confession in that case would result in public edification. But to understand the idea of Origen more completely, his two homilies on Psalm xxxviii. ought to be read with attention. It would be seen that in the first he speaks of

offences that were not subject to canonical penitence, and observes that confession before God was sufficient to obtain their pardon ; in the second he speaks of offences liable to canonical penitence, and recommends the methods of performing the public confession prudently.

When, however, persecutions ceased, and with them ceased the religious warmth of Christians, the discipline of public penance began likewise to cool in certain places, and the Fathers then began to exaggerate the necessity of confession, so that in the Eastern Churches a penitentiary had to be added, to receive the confession of certain sins, as we have seen in the preceding chapter ; and in the Western Churches the penitent no longer made confession of his sins in public, but confessed them to the priest, who afterwards revealed them to the Church, or not, as he judged most prudent. We have seen the abolition of this discipline in the East ; now let us see it in the West. About the middle of the fifth century, Pope Leo I., called the Great, in his Letter 80, otherwise 78, to the bishops of Campagna and Tuscany, decreed that a system of that kind should be abolished, and this for two reasons: first, because very few submitted to penance, being ashamed that their offences should be divulged by the priests ; secondly, because from such publication

arose many disorders, and this among the rest—that the penitents were accused to the magistrates of the crimes which they confessed; and hence ensued a thousand scandals. The knavish Leo caught at the opportunity, and decreed that sins should be confessed to priests alone, and penance be received from them. It is to be observed, however, that the confession to a priest decreed by Leo was not the confession which Innocent III. afterwards enacted, but was the confession of those sins only which, had they been divulged, would have been punishable by the magistrates; therefore it did not refer to all sins, but to those only which otherwise would have been subject to public confession. With these rules, drawn from ecclesiastical history, an answer may be given to the passages of the Fathers which seem to favour auricular confession; and the Fathers may likewise be reconciled with themselves; for we shall otherwise have perpetual contradictions in the writings of the Fathers; and we shall consequently have the right to refuse their testimony, according to the rule of law which says that self-contradictory evidence is not admissible.

For the better elucidation, however, of this doctrine, and to close the mouths of those who would at any cost maintain confession to a priest, we will further examine very briefly some of the strongest

testimonies of the Fathers. St. Cyprian, for instance, says (lib. v., Epist. 14, 16), that *exomologesis* must be resorted to even in little sins. But rightly to understand this and similar phrases of the Fathers, one must consider what was their scope. They had no intention to inculcate the necessity, as *by right divine*, of confessing all and each of their offences to the priest, specifically and circumstantially, in order to have his absolution; but they recommended this confession for the purposes of discipline, first, that the ignorant might be instructed in the gravity of their offences, and in the mode of performing penance for them; secondly, that they might receive medicine for them—that is, might learn how to shun certain sins for the future, and do penance for them; thirdly, to have the benefit of advice in doubtful cases; fourthly, that the penitent might receive consolation. They heard preachers, for instance, speak against sins and sinners; their fears were raised; they went to the priest, and laying bare their conscience, asked if these threats applied to them individually. Nowhere, however, will that confession be found absolutely coercive; nowhere will the priest be found giving absolution. Absolution, it is true, was given, but after the completion of penance; and that absolution was a declaration that the

Church re-admitted the penitent to her communion.

With these historical tests we shall easily reconcile the discordant testimonies of the Fathers on this subject. Thus, for example, we shall easily reconcile John Chrysostom, who, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was an avowed enemy of auricular confession, whilst in other places he seems to defend it. Thus in the second book *de Sacerdotio*, he says, "There is need of much art, that sick Christians may be fully convinced that they must place themselves under the treatment of the priests; or rather, that under the name of treatment and of medicine they may have grace." Of what art, pray, would there be any need, if auricular confession had been clear in the Bible, had been in use from the apostolic times? The art, therefore, consists in making sinners acquainted with the advantage discerned by those Fathers for the relief of sinners in a confession not absolutely compulsory. Thus ought the passage of Origen to be understood in his first homily on Psalm xxxviii.: "As God prepared medicine for bodies, so did He prepare it for souls, in those discourses which He disseminated through the Divine Scriptures, that we may there seek the medicine. Christ is the chief Physician; the other physicians are the ministers of the word, to whom

is committed the discipline of healing souls of their wounds." The healing of sins, then, does not consist, according to Origen, in the absolution of the priest, but in the promises of the Word of God. Thus ought that passage of St. Jerome to be understood: "The wound that is not known is slow to heal;" for he does not say that it does not heal at all, but slowly—to demonstrate, not the necessity, but the utility of disclosing it.

Before we bring this chapter to an end, we would say a few words more to those hot-headed zealots who have been so much scandalized, and have got up such an outcry against us, and applied to us the most vituperative terms, because we asserted that auricular confession was not of Divine institution. To judge of them with the amplest Christian charity, one can only say that they are exceedingly backward in their history, not to have observed that their saints and doctors, down to the Council of Trent, have said the same thing. The opinion of Bonaventura, called "the Seraphic Doctor," is well known;—that confession was only insinuated, not instituted, by Jesus Christ; that it is an apostolical, not a Divine institution; that St. James alone has promulgated it. With this opinion, Bonaventura explicitly denied that confession was a sacrament; for sacraments must be instituted by Jesus Christ.

Those gentlemen are ignorant that Scotus, another doctor of their Church, declared that it would be very convenient if the *command* of confession could be proved with the Gospel: hence he proceeds to examine the passage in chap. xx. of St. John, which appears to him to afford the strongest of the arguments; and yet he finds it very weak. They know not, or pretend not to know, that Panormitanus, a great doctor in the canons, maintains that confession is not of Divine right, but of human institution.* Now, when did a practice become of Divine institution, which in the time of these doctors was of human institution?

* To these might be added, if necessary, Erasmus, *Exomologesis*, *sub. init.* (quoted in full by Gibbings, *Martyrdom of Carnesecchi*, p. 35 n.), and in *Comment. on Jerome* (quoted in full by Gibson, *Preserv.*, vol. x., p. 179); Beatus Rhenanus (*Præf. ad Tertull. de Pænit.*); Gratian (in Chemnit. *Exam. Conc. Trid.* ii., 179: Genev., 1614); The Glossator, Nicolaus de Orbellis, Gabriel, etc. (Gibs., *Preserv.*, vol. x., p. 224.—[*T.*]

CHAPTER VII.

BRIEF HISTORY OF CONFESSION.

LIKE all human institutions, auricular confession has had to pass through gradations: it was not introduced abruptly into Christianity, but was insinuated imperceptibly, and a little at a time.

In apostolical times ecclesiastical discipline was administered according to the instructions of the apostles: for secret sins the Church did not claim for itself the right of judging, but left the judgment of them to God; for open offences, the Church exercised discipline, which consisted principally in excluding the sinner from communion, till he had shown unequivocal signs of repentance, and had repaired the scandal. Such discipline we find practised towards the incestuous person of Corinth (1 Cor. v.). This discipline, so simple and so just, was in process of time subjected to ceremonies, which afterwards gave birth to the doctrines of satisfaction and confession. Separation (generally termed excommunication), which was the sole

penalty by way of discipline established by the apostles, was retained; but this, in the first ages, was applied to murderers, adulterers, and apostates; for other offences there were other penances called canonical, because established by the canons.

When, therefore, a sinner had fallen into any of the sins for which the Church had established a penance, as a sign of repentance he confessed his faults in the congregation, and submitted to canonical penance. But when, after the question of the Novatians, apostates likewise were admitted to penance, the number of penitents became so great, that divine service had to be protracted to a great length by reason of the multitude of offenders who made public confession of their apostasy, and received penance for it. The historian Socrates states (lib. v., c. 19) that under these circumstances the bishops made a canon in which they ordained that a wise and discreet man should be selected from among the presbyters, to hear the confessions of penitents, and impose on them the penance determined by the canons according to the case. This presbyter was called penitentiary, from the penance which he imposed—not capriciously, but according as it was prescribed by the canons. We have seen in Chap. V. that the Novatians refused to receive that

canon, and continued to act according to the ancient discipline; neither did the Churches of Spain and Italy accept it; but in the East the penitentiary remained till Nectarius, as we have related above.

But towards the year 450, Pope Leo I. began to introduce into the Roman Church the custom of confession to the penitentiary, instead of public confession with a view to canonical penance: and in 459, the same Pope reproved the bishops of the Campagna for not having consented to adopt this practice. So while the Bishop of Constantinople was abolishing confession to a priest, the Bishop of Rome was introducing it. This fact, combined with the narrative of Sozomenus quoted above, who states that the Roman Church had not accepted the institution of penitentiary up to his time, demonstrates that confession to a priest, although essentially different from that which now prevails, was not introduced into the Roman Church before the middle of the fifth century.

At the same time there had been introduced in Spain a species of confession to the priest for the purpose of evading canonical penance; but the Council of Toledo, in the year 590, prohibited it by its eleventh canon. These are the words of the canon: "As we have learnt that in some

churches of Spain offenders do not perform penance according to the canons, but in an unbeseeming manner—that is, requiring absolution from the priests every time they sin; therefore, to hinder and put an end to such execrable presumption, the sacred Council decrees, that the priests enjoin a penance according to the ancient canons; that is, that the penitent, first of all, be suspende from communion, and come frequently with the other penitents to receive imposition of hands; and that having completed the time of penance, he be restored to communion: but that those who have relapsed into the same sins, either during the time of penance or afterwards, be condemned according to the severity of the ancient canons." This canon shows that in Spain there were persons desirous of introducing auricular confession; but the Council forbids it, and decrees canonical penance.

The great change in this discipline, and, it may be said, the true principle of auricular confession, was introduced in the ninth century; and even this present came to us from France. Not content with being a great politician, and a great conqueror, Charlemagne had the weakness of desiring to be thought a great theologian, and was largely occupied with assembling councils. Hence we see the Council of Chalons in 813 complain that penance

was no longer practised according to the canons; and it prays the Emperor to decree that for public offences there should be public penance. The Council of Tours offers the same recommendation. At that time commenced the practice of confessing secretly to the priests sins that were not public; but without any positive obligation, and without absolution from the priest.

Alcuin, a theologian of Charlemagne, gives us the rite of secret confession in those times. The penitent, approaching the priest, bowed profoundly; then the priest repeated a prayer over him; next he caused him to sit by him, and heard his declaration; then he counselled him according to the circumstances. After this, the penitent set one knee to the ground, and stretching out his arms, regarded the priest with a look of sorrow, and entreated him to intercede for him. The priest left him for some time in that position, then he directed him to rise, and assigned him penance. The penitent sank upon his knee again, and implored the priest to pray God to give him the strength necessary to complete the penance; then the priest recited some prayers. You see here, according to the testimony of Alcuin, what confession was in the ninth century. Where do we find here the power

* Bibliot. Patr., tom. x.

of the keys? Where the obligation to discover all one's sins? Where is absolution?

Others attribute the introduction of auricular confession to the monks. The rule of St. Benedict imposed on all the monks the duty of confessing their sins to the abbot: he at first was not a priest at all; neither, according to the general opinion, was St. Benedict himself. So true is it that this confession was only a confession of humility, without any idea of a sacrament, or of any power of the keys, that the Benedictine abbesses confessed their nuns according to the rule of St. Benedict, and the custom continued till Innocent III. in the thirteenth century prohibited it. The bishops readily took advantage of the idea of St. Benedict, and began to enjoin confession on the priests; whence they next prescribed it to the laity. But be this as it may, one thing is certain: that up to the ninth century sacramental confession, and absolution—in one word, auricular confession in its present form—did not exist.

We observed above that in the time of Charlemagne began the practice of confession and penance in private for secret sins, canonical penance remaining for public offences. Rabanus, Bishop of Mentz, the oracle of the ninth century, in his book on the instruction of the clergy (chap. xxx.), affords ample

testimony to the practice of his time. "They," says he, "who have committed notorious sins, ought to perform public penance . . . but they who have only been guilty of private sins, and who have revealed them to the priest or bishop by a *voluntary* confession, will do penance in private." Here we have *voluntary*, and not necessary confession, for private sins.

Henceforth almost all the councils speak of public penance which was canonical, and of private penance which followed voluntary confession. Observe here the insensible introduction of auricular confession: still it was very different from that which is now in use. At first it was advice, afterwards it became a practice of certain churches, then it grew into general use; but always as a practice, and not yet either as an obligation to salvation, or as a sacrament, or as a doctrine. Alcuin, in fact, attests that in his days there were excellent Christians, who maintained that confession to God alone sufficed. The Council of Chalons, in the same century, states that the two opinions, that of confessing sins to God alone, and of likewise confessing to a priest, were equally maintained, and that the Church availed itself of both with great advantage.

Further, this usage differed from the present confession in this point also,—that the priest did not

grant absolution, and no one believed that the priest had authority to remit sins. What, then, did the priest do? The Council of Chalons tells us: "Confession made to God cleanses us from sins; that which is made to the priest teaches how we are cleansed." We find the same sentiment in the Ordo Romanus, in the capitulars of Theodolph, and in the books of divine offices attributed to Alcuin. In the ninth century, therefore, auricular confession was simply a custom, with no idea attached to it of obligation, of sacrament, or of doctrine, and absolution was not yet introduced.

The seed of error, however, had been sown, and was fated to produce its fruits. Confession of sin to a priest, with the certainty of having forgiveness from God, was a doctrine marvellously convenient for the sinner; and the practice continued, and was perpetually extending, until in the twelfth century the Schoolmen appeared on the scene, and applied all their subtleties to transform the practice into a doctrine. But the Schoolmen did not agree among themselves; precisely because the subject was a doctrine not yet established, and on which there was nothing certain. St. Bonaventura says that confession was not in truth instituted by Jesus Christ, but by the apostles; that the Lord, however, gave an intimation of it, and St. James

promulged it. Peter of Lombardy, called the "Master of the Sentences," affirms, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ Himself established it. Of St. Thomas Aquinas, called the "Angelic Doctor," it is not satisfactorily known what he meant when he stated that confession was not instituted *in the first place* (*primo*) by men, although it was promulgated by St. James; but was instituted by God, although such an institution is not written. Scotus, called the "Subtile Doctor," is dissatisfied at being unable to find confession in the Gospel; for he observes that the passage in the twentieth chapter of St. John, though the strongest producible, is no proof of confession. Peter of Poitiers observes that the priest has not the power of absolving, but only the right of declaring whether God has forgiven or not. Peter Abelard maintains that the power of binding and loosing was bestowed on the apostles alone, and not transmitted to the priests.

While the Schoolmen were disputing with a view to giving consistency and a legal form to the practice of confession, the Christians who loved the Gospel bestirred themselves. The Waldensians, the Albigensians, the Cathari arose and wrote, and preached against the abuses of the Roman Church, and, amongst these, the practice of confession, which the Schoolmen sought to exalt and render coercive:

their voice was heard, and the clergy were alarmed. Then Innocent III. assembled a numerous Council at Rome (the fourth Lateran, in 1215), and there he published an edict of his own, which was accepted by the Council, in which he established confession as an obligation to be fulfilled at least once a year. Thus did confession, from a simple voluntary practice, pass into an imperative obligation. When, therefore, we assert that confession was introduced by Innocent III., we do not mean to say that he invented it, but that he changed a voluntary practice into a compulsory command.

Innocent III. does not state the motive that instigated him to decree confession; but facts declare it. At the same time he established the Inquisition, with the obligation to denounce heretics under penalty of excommunication; it was, therefore, to assist the Inquisition that confession was established. In fact, the Council of Toulouse, in 1229, extended the edict of Innocent III., and decreed that confession must be made three times a year; and it states that it enacted this decree to be enabled to destroy heresy more effectually,* and declares all those who did not confess three times a year to be suspected of heresy. Here, then, we see auricular

* Labbé, Concil., tom. xi., part i., p. 430.

confession officially installed in Roman Christianity in the thirteenth century.

It was, however, only a precept of discipline; it was not as yet a sacrament—much less a dogma. In fact, many Catholic theologians after the Lateran Council maintained that, although confession was a precept, it was not however, a sacrament. Pope Nicholas V., towards the middle of the fifteenth century, hung Stephen Porcaro, a Roman noble, and would not admit him to confess, though Porcaro begged it importunately. Nicholas V., therefore, did not believe confession to be a sacrament necessary to salvation: in fact, it was the custom in Italy to deny confession to criminals condemned to death. But what proves to a demonstration that, even after the time of Innocent III., confession was not what it is now, is the decree of Gratian preserved in the Canon Law (Decret. II., pars, causa xxxiii., q. 3. cap. 33, 34, 36, 37), where it is said that confession is an external portion of satisfaction, being equivalent to the rending of the garments among the ancient Hebrews; and he subjoins that by contrition, not by confession, forgiveness is obtained. In chapter 34 he says that pardon is received without confession; and he cites the example of the lepers of the Gospel, who were sent to the priests after they were cleansed: "From which fact," he says, "we ought

to understand that we are cleansed from our sins even before we confess them to the priest ;" afterwards he arrives at the same conclusion, through the fact that Lazarus was first revived from the dead, and then issued from the tomb. In chapter 36 he says—" Therefore, just as before confession, as we have already proved, we are raised to life by grace, and made children of light, thus it most evidently appears that sin is remitted by contrition of the heart alone, without confession of the mouth." Finally, in chapter 37, he says, " Sin, therefore, is not remitted in confession, as it has been proved that it is already remitted. Hence confession is made to demonstrate repentance, and not to sue for pardon. And as circumcision was enjoined on Abraham as a sign of righteousness, not as a cause of justification, thus confession to the priest is made as a sign of the pardon already received, and not because pardon is received by confession." This evidence is in the Canon Law of the Roman Church,—and not in an edition compiled by Protestants, but in the Turin edition, tom. i., pp. 1017, 1018, 1019. The confession, therefore, of Innocent III. was a decree of discipline,—not a sacrament, not a dogma ; neither was absolution included in it.

After the Lateran decree the transition to the necessity of confession was easy. It was necessary

by the precept of Innocent III., and theologians proceeded to demonstrate the necessity of such a precept; and thus its absolute necessity came to be insensibly established. But in the fourteenth century John Wycliffe attacked the Roman Church on many errors, and especially on confession; and as theologians began to call confession a sacrament, so he denied it. The Pope condemned Wycliffe; and with the condemnation was indirectly asserted the contrary proposition—that confession was a sacrament. The Florentine Council, or in it Eugenius IV., in his decree for the Armenians, published in that Council, put penance in the number of the sacraments. Finally the Council of Trent completed the doctrine of the Roman Church on confession. After such historical changes through which the doctrine has passed, to assert that it is of Divine institution, and has always been practised in the Church, is to lie shamelessly.*

* The author evidently alludes to the celebrated "MENTIRIS IMPUDENTISSIME" of the Capuchin Valerian (Pascal, *Lettres Provinciales*, Let. xv., vol. iv., p. 192; Let. xvii., p. 387: Amst., 1767).

CHAPTER VIII.

AURICULAR CONFESSION IS OPPOSED TO SOUND REASON.

THE Christian ought to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him, and to return an answer to every man who requires it (1 Peter iii. 15); such is the religion of Jesus Christ. If the sublimity of the mysteries which reveal the Divine nature is such as to surpass the limits of our understanding, it is not, however, such as to be in opposition to the dictates of sound reason. But if the doctrine of auricular confession for the remission of sins were to be admitted, it would not only be in opposition to the Word of God, and the practice of the apostolical Church, but would be in opposition to sound reason. Reason, aided and supported by revelation, ought to assist us in doctrinal researches. Let us apply this principle to the dogma of confession.

Supposing, as the Roman Church affirms, that the Lord Jesus Christ had conferred on the apostles the power of forgiving sins through the medium of con-

fession, in virtue of the words in chapter xx. of the Gospel of St. John cited above, only see in what a dilemma the Roman Church finds itself involved. It must needs admit, either that Jesus Christ was sent into the world by the Father to hear confessions, or it must say that in those words, "Whosesoever sins ye remit," etc., the power of absolving sins is not contained for the apostles. The discourse of Jesus Christ ought to be true throughout: now, immediately before the words "Whosesoever sins ye remit," etc., He says, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you;" but the Father did not send Jesus to hear confessions, and thus absolve sinners; but to save them by His death. Now, Christ, in committing the mission to His disciples, did not appoint them to die for the salvation of mankind, but to announce salvation by grace, through the preaching of the Gospel; in saying, therefore, to His disciples, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," He completely excludes them from the power of forgiving sins through confession, and exempts Christians from the obligation of confessing them to a priest.

But the fate of such as desire to impose a false doctrine on others, is to fall into the most absurd self-contradictions: so has it happened to the Roman Church in all the doctrines superinduced

on the Bible, and among them in confession. The Roman Church lays down confession as a sacrament; but it does not recollect that it has itself defined a sacrament to be a "visible sign of invisible grace, instituted by Christ Himself for our justification." * But confession is not a visible sign of the grace of God: let us look to it. Confession, as far as it is a sacrament, is composed, according to the Council of Trent, of four parts,—contrition, accusation of sins, and satisfaction (which compose the matter of the asserted sacrament), and absolution, (which is its form); but none of these four parts is a visible sign of the grace of God. Not contrition; for, according to the Council of Trent, contrition is "sorrow of the mind," and sorrow of the mind is not visible: it is an inward feeling. Accusation of sins is not a visible sign, nor a sign of the grace of God. It is not a visible sign: a sacramental sign ought to be visible to all; but the words of the accusation are heard, not seen; and are heard by the confessor alone. It is not a sign of the grace of God, but, on the contrary, a sign of not being in grace: not a sign of the grace of God, because, even according to the Roman Church, it does not produce grace infallibly; for not all those who confess their sins are

* *Catech. Conc. Trid.*, pt. ii., c. 1, § 5; et *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, l. x., c. 5, et Ep. 2.

justified; it is not a sign of grace, since it is rather a sign of sin. Satisfaction is not a visible sign; because for the most part it consists in the recital of certain prayers, and to no one will it be easy to perceive what is the satisfaction imposed on him who returns from the confessional box,—a matter which would be easily known if the satisfaction were visible. Much less is absolution visible, consisting of a muttered recitation of certain mysterious and magic words, by which the foulest murderer becomes pure as an angel;* nor yet can absolution be a sign of grace,—for, according to Rome, it is itself the grace. There being, therefore, in the parts of confession, no visible sign of invisible grace, we must needs say, either that it is not true that a sacrament ought to be such a sign, or that it is not true

* Correspondent to this are the general sentiments of Romanists. "Ear-confession would burnish them again, and make them white as snow, though they should offend ever so oft" (Massey, *Secret History of Romanism*, ch. v., p. 350). Nor are the Ritualists one whit behind the Romanists. Says one of them, "Whenever a poor penitent comes to me and confesses his sins, when I absolve him he rises as pure as snow." As a practical consequence, a Tyrolese woman admits to Miss Weppner, without the slightest indication of shame or compunction, that she tells fifty lies a day; "but I go and confess every Saturday" (*Northern Star and Southern Cross*, vol. ii., ch. vii., p. 439). It would be endless to adduce evidence of the demoralizing effects of the confessional in Roman Catholic

that confession is a sacrament. Signor priests, make your election.

But, according to the doctrine of the Roman Church, as defined in the Council of Florence, the administration of a sacrament is not valid if it does not comprise matter, form, and the intention of the minister to do that which the Church intends to do. Let us apply this doctrine to confession. Contrition of heart is an essential part or matter of this alleged sacrament. Here, then, is matter concealed and hidden in the heart of a sinner, to form the sacrament. How, then, will the priest be able to pronounce the sacramental form over matter to him unknown, and whose existence is uncertain? Add, that in this case, God, to confer a grace such as is that of justification, would depend on the will of the sinner, who might make a mock of God, and render a sacrament null at his own pleasure.

Add to all this, that the alleged sacrament would

countries. Suffice it to record the testimony of a most intelligent Dissenting minister at Cork, as given on oath before the House of Lords. Speaking of the effect of confession, he says, "No Roman Catholic of the lower orders has any dread of final perdition. I have spoken to them frequently on the subject, and never found one of them that supposed he could go to hell." And again, "The confidence of the people in their absolution, which follows confession, is such as completely to destroy in their minds any fear of future punishment." Phillpotts, *Letters to C. Butler*, pp. 214-15 : Lond., 1866.—[*T.*]

be nullified at the pleasure of the priest who administers it, either by not pronouncing the sacramental words rightly, or, which may happen more easily, by want of intention.* What immense and perpetual uncertainties have we here! for who can be sure of having had contrition? Who can be sure that the priest had not his attention otherwise directed when he pronounced the sacramental words?

From which causes it ensues, as a legitimate consequence, that Jesus Christ, in the new law, imposed an insupportable burden that had no existence in the old, and that He has rendered salvation more difficult in the new law than in the old, by making it depend on so many circumstances. Whence, it would not be true that Jesus Christ had come to deliver us from the yoke of the law, but rather that He had imposed a yoke much more oppressive.

Nevertheless, the simple-minded Christian, by a very clear argument, can destroy all the sophisms of the Roman theologians respecting confession, and reduce them to nullity. Every Christian knows that no one has a right to annex a condition to the remission of sins but He who remits them. Every Christian knows that it is not the priest, but God, that remits sins. If, therefore, to

* Appendix, F.

the remission of sins there is any condition whatever attached, it ought to be imposed by God, and therefore ought to be contained in His Word; but there it is not, or rather the contrary is there, as we have demonstrated; therefore confession is not a condition necessary to the forgiveness of sins. Thus reasoned the primitive Church; thus reasoned all the faithful, until, in the times of ignorance, theologians and popes stepped in to make us a present of this new sacrament, as we saw in the previous chapter.

Right reason, enlightened by the Word of God, instructs us that we ought to humble ourselves before Him whom we have offended; and therefore the Bible informs us that for the sins by which we offend God we ought to humble ourselves before Him, that for the sins by which we offend our neighbour we ought to humble ourselves before God and the neighbour whom we have offended. What reason is there that for an offence committed against a third person I should go and humble myself before a priest whom I have never offended?—that for an offence committed against God I should humble myself before a priest, and not rather before God alone? But the priest, they say, holds the place of God. We have demonstrated that this is not true—that God has never conferred such a privilege

on the priest. And then the Bible clearly instructs us that between us and God there is no other mediator than Jesus Christ. Neither the Bible, therefore, nor tradition, nor history, nor reason, is in favour of confession.

CHAPTER IX.

AURICULAR CONFESSION IS INJURIOUS TO FAITH AND MORALS.

THE foundation of the Christian religion is Jesus Christ and His redemption. Man is naturally a sinner; human nature is to such a degree corrupted, and is in such a state of rebellion against God, that every man without Christ is in fact excluded from salvation, and subjected to a terrible condemnation. But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). Therefore the salvation of man is through Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ; and the only condition that Jesus Christ has prescribed for obtaining salvation is faith in Him. Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is therefore the sole foundation of the religion of the Gospel. Grace and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and not through any other merit, is the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. But the dogma of con-

fession completely overthrows this fundamental doctrine, attributing the validity of the sacrament to the acts of the penitent, and consequently attributing the remission of sins to works,* and not, as the Gospel teaches, to faith in Jesus Christ.

And observe how the redemption of Jesus Christ is completely nullified in the Roman Church by the doctrine of redemption of sins in virtue of confession! And, in truth, what more would Jesus Christ have effected with His death, than purchasing us the bare power of redeeming ourselves? And in this case is not redemption entirely annulled? Were a creditor to say to his debtor, "I remit your debt on condition that you pay," could it be said that he had forgiven it? From confession it arises that the Roman Catholic, unable to believe that Jesus Christ is a perfect Saviour, does not make his salvation depend solely on Jesus Christ, but believes it due to himself: hence, neglecting true piety, he gives himself to works, with which he pretends to satisfy Divine justice, not believing that it has been perfectly and superabundantly satisfied by Christ our Saviour.

The foundation of the Christian religion being

* Conc. Trid., *De Pœnit.*, cap. iii., sess. xiv., et can. iv., ejusd. sess.

thus overthrown, the whole Christian edifice based on it is demolished by this dogma, and the most absurd doctrines introduced into the Church in consequence of the new doctrine of confession. The Roman Church itself denies the infinite virtue of the redemption of Jesus Christ, when it solemnly teaches that the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are mixed up with the merits of the Virgin, of all the saints, and with the good works of the sinner who confesses, in order to obtain from God the remission of sins,*—an absurd doctrine, and full of blasphemy, which renders the sacrifice of Christ absolutely null, which seems even to deny His divinity, reducing His merits to a level with the merits of the creature; even associating with the merits of Christ the pretended merits of the sinner who sues for pardon, and making both alike serve for the remission of sins. Hence Christ is no longer

* This impious doctrine is taught in the sacramental words—that is, in the form of absolution in the Roman Church. Here are the precise words: "*Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi, merita Beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis et omnium sanctorum, et quicquid boni feceris, vel mali sustinueris, tibi sint in remissionem peccatorum, augmentum gratiæ, et præmium æternæ vitæ. Amen.*" [The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the blessed Mary always Virgin, and of all the saints, and whatever good you have done, and whatever evil you have suffered, be unto you for the remission of sins, the increase of grace, and the reward of eternal life. Amen.]

the Redeemer of man; or, if He is, it is in common with man himself.

No slight damage, certainly, is inflicted on the faith by the doctrine of confession; but the injury is comprehended in all its magnitude only by pious souls, by those who really love God, and acknowledge in Jesus Christ their only Saviour. More perceptible and visible to all is the mischief inflicted by confession on morality.

Ye innocent maidens who, through the impure and impertinent interrogations of a confessor, learnt the evil of which you ought always to have been ignorant; ye chaste wives who, through the infamous solicitations of a godless confessor,* learnt to be false to the marriage bed; ye beardless youths who, instructed by a confessor, have been the victims of an infamous offence,—be ye my witnesses in proof of my assertion! To your consciences I appeal; and I am certain to have thousands of witnesses in Rome, and thousands more throughout Italy, who in the depth of their consciences can say, "We know, by our own experience, that the words of the exile are true." But of these facts not many come to the public light; and to him alone can they be fully known who, like the exile, has sat for full fifteen years in a confessional chair.

* Appendix G.

Let us rather turn our eyes to the public immorality which reigns in countries where the confessional is most frequented.

The facilities for obtaining pardon of sins by relating them to a priest, too often a boon companion in the excesses of the penitent, pave the way to the commission of new sins. "Sin confessed, sin forgiven;" "confessing a hundred sins is as good as confessing a hundred and ten," are popular proverbs in Italy. But I take for an example Rome, the city which boasts to be the centre of religion, the seat of the pretended Vicar of Jesus Christ, the city where, more than in any other place, confession is largely practised. I likewise take Rome as an example, because of that city I can speak with certain knowledge. That that city was my native place, that I discharged in it for fifteen years the ministry of hearing confessions, that I fulfilled in it for eight years the duties of a parish priest,—these facts give me sufficient knowledge to speak with certainty. Rome is the city which surpasses all the other cities of Italy in immorality. But perhaps the blame ought to be imputed to the Roman people? No; the Roman people, noble, generous as its forefathers, would be the people of the greatest virtue, an heroic people, if it were trained to virtue, if it

were educated in the Gospel. But all the fine qualities of that people are stifled by the teaching of its Church, and the people is brutalized in guilt. Blasphemy against God is the predominant vice of the Roman; but the blasphemer confesses, departs absolved, and is no sooner out of the church than he begins to blaspheme anew. Drunkenness, murder, theft, fraud, adultery, are crimes incessantly repeated; but whoever commits them confesses, and believes himself absolved; and immorality is not only not arrested, but, by the facility of pardon at the cost of a few prayers, is committed again without scruple. There is no Society that had not annually (at least up to 1848) its spiritual exercises to prepare for confession; the number of individuals who did not confess at Easter in so vast a city never amounted to fifty; yet, with so many confessions, immorality was ever on the increase, and vice ever triumphant; and the increase was greatest (I speak of notorious facts) in those who were most regular in confession; and to them is Rome indebted for the current proverb, "Better an unbeliever than a bigot."

Criminal statistics* are available to attest that

* Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, states that one-third of the prisoners in Scotland are Irish, who are only one-fifteenth of the population. In Liverpool the Roman Catholics, with a population of, at most, one-fourth, supply more than two-thirds

in countries where confession is in use crime assumes a more aggravated form than in Protestant countries; and in those where Protestants and Catholics are intermingled, the Catholics, who confess, are the more grievous offenders. Let statistics be appealed to, and it will be seen that if Catholic criminals are in ratio to the population as ten to a thousand, for instance, Protestant criminals are only as one to a thousand. Let Protestant England be attentively regarded, and compared with Catholic Ireland; the Protestant cantons of Switzerland

of the criminals—most of them women. In London the police report that one-fourth of the women of bad character are Irish. The murders in Protestant England are four to a million, in the Papal States 113 to a million, in Naples 174 to a million. In London the illegitimate births are 4 per cent., in Vienna 51 per cent., in Klagenfort 56 per cent., in Gratz 65 per cent. (Hobart Seymour, *Evenings with Romanists*, pp. xxviii., xlv.); and the foundlings at Rome 75 per cent. (Blakeney, *Popery in its Social Aspects*, ch. xix., p. 171). This is in a city of 40,000 priests, monks, and nuns (*Religion of Rome by a Roman*, ch. x., p. 52). No wonder that an Italian lady exclaimed to an English lady of Mr. Soames' acquaintance, "*You* have a religion, *we* have none." Duppa, in his *Brief Account of the Subversion of the Papal Government*, p. 87: Lond., 1799, reports from official statistics that during Pius VI.'s reign, of twenty-two years, 18,000 persons were murdered in public and private quarrels (Soames' *Latin Church*, ch. iv., p. 101, n.). See also Roussel, *Catholic and Protestant Nations*, passim; Hobart Seymour, *The Confessional*, chs. xii., xiii., pp. 138—154; Dr. McCrie, *Works*, vol. iii., pp. 186-7: Edin., 1856.—[*T.*]

with the Swiss cantons; the country of the Waldensians with the rest of Piedmont. Let statistics be consulted, and the difference will be seen at a glance between Protestants who do not confess to a priest and Catholics who do; it will be seen that the latter are much more criminal and immoral than the former.

But how can it happen otherwise, if immorality, thanks to confession, is reduced by Catholic priests to scientific principles? The most shameless libertine could not read without blushing the filth which is contained in the books of moral theology;* and

* "It is notorious, and attested by all who have seen them, that the books of religious instruction which are put into the hands of young Romanists, particularly those touching auricular confession, are indecent, gross, and filthy beyond description" (Dr. Gilly, *Excursion to the Mountains of Piedmont*, p. 153, n.: Lond. 1825).

The *Constitutionnel*, May 2nd, 1825, expresses its horror at finding in a book of the kind "obscene expressions, impure details, a complete *exposé* of the most monstrous combinations of licentiousness: in short, a treatise to teach debauchery and corruption . . . acquainting young girls with the nomenclature of a series of vices of which, in ordinary circumstances, women remain ignorant their whole lives" (*Ibid.*). Another Roman Catholic writer describes the books intended to instruct the priests as "a wandering mass of iniquity, which would have been abhorred of ancient Sodom." The system is described by a distinguished French writer as "the learned rottenness of casuistry and carnal materialism." "Nothing," says another, "have I ever read in any heathen author worse than these

it is upon these books that the education of the young clergy in the seminaries is formed. Those youthful minds, fervid, and abnormally excited by forced privation, after four years devoted to the study of all possible and imaginable indecencies,—what will be their conduct when, in the flower of youth, they find themselves all alone with a beautiful girl, with a young bride who lays open her heart, and entrusts such youths with all her weaknesses? Unhappy victims of the confessional, it is for you to answer!

sacred books,—nothing even which approaches them" (Chais, *Lettres sur les Jubilés*, t. ii., let. xxi., p. 501). A sainted author of one of these filthy treatises confesses that they are to the last degree offensive and disgusting (Liguori, *Moral Theology, Blakeney's edition*, ch. xi., p. 164, ch. xvi., p. 290: Lond., 1852). "The books are indeed horrible," says the Romanist, "but necessary for the confessional." Better get rid of the confessional, at the best a doubtful good, than admit the books connected with it, confessedly an enormous evil. Foul and nauseous as these books are, there are instructions delivered in the seminaries for the education of the priesthood so disgustingly indecent that no one dare commit them to print. They are retained in manuscript, and guarded with vigilant precautions, which, however, are not always successful (Michelet, *Le Prêtre, la Femme*, etc., p. 246).—[*T.*]

CHAPTER X.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS IS IMPOSSIBLE UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF CONFESSION.

IF confession is naturally ruinous to faith and morals, religious progress under such a system is manifestly impossible. By religious progress is to be understood, not the invention of new doctrines, nor of new adjuncts to the religious system of the Gospel; for instead of advancing, that would be to retrograde; and of such progress there has already been even too much. The Gospel is the work of God—therefore a perfect work; hence every addition to the Gospel is an imperfection, a delinquency, a sacrilege, a religious obscuration. Religious progress will be the re-establishment of the religion of the Gospel, so much disfigured by the Popes. But confession is the great obstacle opposed by the Popes to the re-establishment of the religion of the Gospel; hence it is necessary to demolish such an obstacle to religious progress. Let us to the proof.

In the thirteenth century the religious spirit awoke

again in Europe: courageous Christians, whom the Popes called heretics, began to unmask the abuses of the Roman Church; they shook off the dust from the Sacred Scriptures, and putting them into the hands of the people, taught them how widely the doctrine and morality of the Roman Church differed from the doctrine and morality of the Gospel. These noble-minded men found numerous followers; and the multitude, surprised at the loveliness of the evangelical doctrines, read the Bible, and in great numbers abandoned the Roman Church. The Pope and the despots trembled for themselves, fearing that they would no longer be able to exercise their tyrannical domination, if the people became acquainted with the Gospel;* they resorted to violent remedies; blood ran in torrents; the most horrible cruelties were committed on the followers of the Gospel. But *open* persecution has never been an

* Of all weapons the Gospel is the most formidable to tyrants. Roman Catholicism is their favourite religion. The great despot Louis XIV., called the Grand Monarque, wrote thus to the King of Tonquin, on the 10th January, 1681: "What we would most desire for you and for your states would be to obtain, for those of your subjects who have embraced the law of the only true God of heaven and earth, the liberty of professing it,—this law being the most sublime, most noble, most holy, and above all *the best adapted for enabling kings to reign* ABSOLUTELY *over their subjects.*" See *Key of the Cabinet*, quoted in the philosophical decade, year V., quart. iii., n. 26, 20 prairial, p. 501.

appropriate instrument for destroying a religious conviction: a *secret* persecution must be invented—a worm to gnaw unseen into the life of the plant, and wither it.

As we have already observed, in Chapter VI., Innocent III., the most knavish and the most audacious of all who have ever occupied the Roman See, resorted to the remedy. In the fourth Lateran Council (1215), after having proclaimed crusades, after having canonized persecution against those who published the Gospel,* he instituted compulsory confession for all the followers of the Church of Rome, as a measure of preventive policy,† to compel to denunciation of heretics under penalty of eternal damnation; and thus confession, which at first was free, became compulsory, and was afterwards converted, by the decision of the Council of Trent, into a dogma of faith, and a sacrament. The aim of confession, therefore, is to prevent all religious progress, and maintain ignorance and superstition.

Another object of confession is to keep up the influence of the clergy in families. The feeblest persons, but possessing the greatest influence in the

* Conc. Lat., iv., c. 3, *De Hæret.* apud Labbé, tom. ii., pt. 1, p. 148, sq.

† Conc. Lat., iv., c. 21.

family—women, lads, and old men—are the most constant in confession. In continual contact with the priest, and feeble by nature, they allow themselves to be imposed upon by him, especially in matters of religion ; and husbands, fathers, and sons dare not hazard a word in the family circle with a view to exposing the abuses of the clergy in religious subjects ; they dare not read the Bible, dare not enter into religious conversations—both to avoid throwing a gloom over persons so dear to them, and for fear of being denounced. For the priest cannot absolve a wife or a son, if, with the knowledge that the husband or the father speaks of the Gospel otherwise than in the sense of the Church of Rome, they have not denounced him to the Inquisition, where it exists, or else to the bishop, where the Inquisition exists no longer. Imagine, then, if religious progress is possible, where the discipline of the confessional exists.*

* We have no desire to take advantage of the examples furnished by history to point out the political influence of confession n past ages, when it was the custom for a confessor, and a Jesuit confessor, to be at the elbow of every sovereign. Such a custom, thank Heaven, has passed away, although the influence of priests on the minds of sovereigns has not entirely ceased. But since such an abuse is no longer either so general or so powerful, we have renounced the advantages we might have derived from the influence of confessors over sovereigns in hindering the very least religious progress in the world.

The horrible consequence, however, for religion and for souls, is that infidelity advances with huge strides, especially in Roman Catholic countries. The enlightenment of the age no longer permits men to believe in the priests blindly, as in the times of ignorance. Free discussion alone could show that the doctrines of the Roman Church are not those of the Gospel; discussion, as it would prove their falsehood to a demonstration, would establish the truth of evangelical doctrine. Discussion being prevented, it follows that, seeing clearly the falsehood and the iniquity of the Roman doctrines, men believe them, because they are not discussed, to be the doctrines of the Christian religion, and abandon them, and live in indifference and infidelity. Rome sees, knows, and is silent: she never quarrels with infidels, unless they speak against her; but her quarrel rather is with those who, laying bare her abuses, seek to bring back their brethren to the Gospel, the religion of their fathers. The unbelieving and the superstitious equally subserve the Church of Rome, and are equally beloved by it: the Gospel alone it detests, and for the destruction of the Gospel it instituted confession.

Through confession the people withers away in religious ignorance. What is this religious instruction which is given in Catholic countries? I speak

of Rome, because of that city I can speak with full knowledge of the case. In Rome all religious instruction consists in teaching the people to confess: confession and Roman Christianity are there convertible terms. Do you wish to know a so-called good Christian? It is he who confesses frequently. Do you wish to carry a certificate of Christianity? Carry a certificate of confession. The servants of of the Cardinals cannot touch their wages at the beginning of the month, unless they present the certificate of confession.* Meanwhile religious igno-

* Since every person in Spain and Papal Italy was registered for confession (Story, *Roba di Roma*, vol. ii., ch. v., p. 85; *Roman Catholicism in Spain*, ch. viii., p. 153), it was important to possess a certificate that the law to confess had been complied with. Even in France, where there is no public or official registration, the influence of the priesthood is such that permissions to communicate without confession are on sale in the churches at Paris (M. Weppner, *North Star and Southern Cross*, ch. i., p. 58). At Rome many of the poorer classes go the round of the churches, confess and communicate at each, and sell the tickets received at communion to persons to whom the process of confession is unpalatable. Some parish priests, perhaps to diminish the profits of this discreditable traffic, voluntarily supply tickets to those who have not confessed (Desanctis, *Roma Papale*, Let. xii., n. vii., p. 269). St. Liguori rules that a confessor may give a testimonial to the most abandoned character, certifying that he was duly confessed and absolved, when he was not, provided the certificate he signed was printed, not written (*Theol. Moral.*, Blakeney's ed., pp. 223, 285). Not many years ago, gangs of some fifty persons might

rance is such, that they do not even know that there is a book called the Bible, containing the word of God. The people's article of faith is, "I believe all that Holy Church believes."* Such religious ignorance engenders superstitious infidelity, immorality, and the loss of souls. But what signifies it? Such ignorance maintains confession.

be seen led to prison at Rome in Easter week for want of this valuable attestation to their religious and moral character. It should have been mentioned above, that in Spain "tickets are publicly sold in the churches by the sacristans and other inferior agents of the priesthood, for the moderate sum of a *peseta* (tenpence)."—*Roman Catholicism, etc.*, p. 154. In wholesale conversions confession tickets played an important part. When fathers saw their houses overrun with dragoons,—"Salvationists," they were termed—and every room defiled with oaths, obscenities, and drunken orgies, and wives and daughters exposed to the worst atrocities; when mothers were tied down, day and night, at such a distance from their babes that they could not minister to their wants ("The Reformation and Anti-Reformation in Bohemia," vol. ii., ch. iv., pp. 116, 129: Lond., 1845); when peasants were similarly placed with respect to their flocks and herds, and must either see them perish of starvation, or, if they yielded through pity at the moanings of the poor famished animals, be guilty of apostasy (Ib., vol. ii., ch. vii., p. 238): when these and a thousand similar devices of ingenious cruelty were employed, no wonder that confession tickets, as a proof of conversion, were applied for faster than they could be signed, that they were struggled and fought for (Ib., vol. ii., ch. iv., p. 120), and that priests amassed enormous sums by their sale (Ib., ch. v., p. 164).—[*T.*]

* In other words, 'I don't know what I believe.'—[*T.*]

CHAPTER XI.

CONFESSION ENTAILS GRIEVOUS INJURIES ON THE INDIVIDUAL, THE FAMILY, AND SOCIETY.

JESUS CHRIST is the Divine Benefactor of humanity; every law, every institution of His, breathes gentleness, sweetness, love, and is directed to relieve man from the yoke of bondage and oppression, and conduct human nature to the highest possible degree of perfection: therefore a law of oppression, of despotism, of degradation, tending to the injury of society, can never have been instituted by the Son of God, but must be the invention of despotism and tyranny. Such is the institution of confession.

The individual who submits to such a discipline is so debased and degraded as to have reason to be ashamed of himself. Can greater debasement and degradation be imagined than to have to reveal all one's weaknesses to a man? It might have been endurable were it to receive counsel from him, to find in him a guide in the way of salvation: no, it is to obtain his forgiveness. Shall I obtain absolution from a

man for offences committed against God? If I have offended my brother, am I to beg absolution from a third person, and not, rather, from him whom I have offended? It were endurable, again, if this confessor were a saint; but who are the confessors? The notorious ABBO * was a confessor at Rome; and how many others could I name in Rome itself, public usurers, public concubinarians, and wretches

* The priest *Abbo* was a favourite of the Jesuits and of Cardinal Lambreschini, and on the eve of being made a prelate; but the *post-mortem* examination of the body of a young nephew who died in his house without an illness discovered him to be worse than a murderer of the innocent; and public indignation compelled the government of Gregory XVI. to condemn him to death, in spite of all the interest used by his powerful protectors.

Abbo, upon the principles of his Jesuit patrons, was fully justified in killing his nephew.—"It will be lawful for an ecclesiastic, or one of a religious order, to kill a calumniator who threatens to spread atrocious accusations against himself or his religion, when other means of defence are wanting" (Franc. Amicus, *Curs. Theol.* t. v., Disp. 36, Sect. 5, n. 118: Duaci, 1642).

So also Wendrock [Nicolle], in his notes on Pascal's 5th Prov. Let.: "L'Ami, Caramouel, and several others maintain that a member of a religious order may kill those who spread calumnies against his order, when he has no other means of preventing it." (Ibid., vol. ii., p. 73: Amsterd., 1767; see also Dalton, *Principles and Acts of Jesuits*, pt. i., ch. vii., p. 51: Lond., 1843; *Principles of the Jesuits*, pp. 209, 210: Lond., 1839).

A calumny, we have seen above, is explained as anything, true or false, that is detrimental to one's character.—[*T.*]

of every kind, who sit in the confessional chairs? And is it to creatures like these that a man falls on his bended knees, and declares his faults? Can greater degradation be imagined for a human being? But while the penitent arraigns his faults with all the fatuity of a simpleton, what is the confessor doing? Laughing at the simplicity of the penitent; and afterwards, in the priestly orgies that follow a morning of great confessions, in the hilarity that flows from wine, amidst coarse explosions of laughter, they describe to each other the stupid folly of their penitents, and each priest vies with his brother in rendering his own penitents more ridiculous than the rest.* To such a degree is the individual debased and degraded by confession!

But it creates still greater mischief in the family. Ye heads of families, use your utmost efforts to maintain your young daughters in their beautiful innocence: only suffer them to frequent the confessional, and they will become proficients in every kind of wickedness. How many imprudent marriages, contracted against the will of the parents, have there not been hatched in the confessionals!† How

* Appendix H.

† On this subject see also *Le Jésuite*, par l'Abbé * * *, vol. i., pp. 93, 271-4; iii., p. 230; Michelet, *Le Prêtre, etc.*, pt. iii., ch. i., p. 273; *Roman Catholicism in Spain*, by an Old Resident ch. viii., p. 160.—[*T.*]

many daughters suddenly abandon the paternal roof to throw themselves into the arms of a husband of their own caprice, or to bury themselves in a nunnery, at the instigation of their confessors! From the confessional proceed the most serious discords in families: the priest is determined to rule at all costs; hence you must either fall into his ideas, and thus make yourself his slave, or else prepare to wage a family war. If you conform to his ideas, you will no longer be master in your own house, you will no longer be able to do anything without the *placet* of the confessor; he will thrust himself between you and your wife, and, heedless of that sacred bond, a meddlesome priest will interpose with his counsels, his insinuations; he will interfere between you and your sons, and your paternal authority will only be allowed to exert itself in subordination to the dictates of your priest; he will arrange the marriages of your sons; he will preside at their choice of a profession; he, in short, will be the true father of the family—you will only execute his will. Suppose you determine to escape this state of degradation, and propose to maintain your position as father and husband, then all family peace is ruined; you will be looked on as an infidel, and as such, with hypocritical compassion, the confessor will describe you to your wife and to your sons; and

your wife will receive you in her arms with an inward shudder, and your sons will withhold from you their esteem, and look upon you as one of the lost; to every arrangement of yours you will experience open or secret opposition; the heart of your wife and of your sons will be closed against you; the happiness that arises from the free expansion of the affections in the family circle will be to you unknown, and instead of finding comfort and consolation in the bosom of those who are dear to you, you will experience distrust and sorrow.

This is the genuine history of those Roman Catholic families which still attach any importance to confession: the priest must either be a despot, or the fomenter of discord. Whence it frequently occurs that the head of the family, weary of so much suffering, either becomes a hypocrite, and succumbs for the sake of peace, or loses his affection for his family, and allows it to run its own course. If the misfortunes of so many households were analysed with a philosophic eye, many of them would be perceived to have derived their origin from confession.

By confession, in fact, so many families are immersed in poverty; because the grasping confessor, taking advantage of the weak moments of a dying man, has had the will made to the profit of the

clergy: * and facts of the kind may be reckoned by the million. From confession arise so many separations of married people—frequent in proportion to the frequency of confessions. Rome presents the example of ten per cent. of marriage separations, and almost all of them the doing of the confessors. And the sons? The sons abandoned, or brought up in the division of their parents, either side with the one and hate the other, or hate them both. The commandment of God? Confession annuls it.

Nor are the mischiefs less which confession inflicts on society. Some very rare and incomplete restitutions by means of confession—lo! these are the advantages which certain priests loudly proclaim in favour of confession. But these panegyrists suppress the fact that conscientious restitutions are precisely one of the most lucrative funds of the confessional. How many confessors, where fiduciary testaments are permitted, have been left fiduciary heirs of their penitents, and have thus absorbed the whole inheritance! To whom, in fact, confide secret restitutions, if not to him to whom all the secrets of a weak conscience are known? And thus the confessor, finding himself the depositary of a rich inheritance, without witnesses to attest the wishes of the departed, without an obligation to render an account

* Appendix I.

to any one, because the secrets of confession are in question, becomes directly or indirectly master of the whole, to the ruin of the heirs, and to the disgrace of the community which tolerates such iniquities. There are priests in Rome (and we could name them) who, from being miserably poor before they were confessors, now roll in riches, and inhabit the palaces of their penitents, whilst the relations, the legitimate heirs, are either reduced to beggary, or have thrown themselves in despair into the Tiber. What happens at Rome, happens, a little more, a little less, in all countries where confession is in vogue.

But these much-vaunted restitutions are, after all, mere dust thrown in the eyes of simpletons, that they may not observe the peculations of the confessors: so rare are they, so insignificant, that they do not restore even a thousandth part of the plunder. To these insignificant restitutions, which yet would be an advantage to society, is to be contrasted the encouragement given to theft, as to every other crime, by the facility of obtaining pardon; and the absolutions given to robbers, usurers, murderers, without their having made any restitution whatever. They repair to the confessor, present him with a goodly offering for a mass, or, if they are robbers of celebrity, men abounding in wealth, they found a chapelry, a bene-

nce, or something of the kind; and who is the confessor to resist the force of such powerful arguments, and send away the penitent without absolution? At Rome, the public robbers who are in the galleys confess, all of them, once a year, and even oftener; but never from those places does there come a restitution, though it is known that the objects stolen are secreted: yet they confess and communicate.

Nor let me be told that this abuse attaches to the confessors, not to confession, for I will, for the truth's sake, defend the confessors. At Rome, for instance, every one knows that Pius VII. granted to all who hear confessions in the holy house of Ponterotto the privilege of absolving from the obligation of restitution all who have defrauded the reverend Apostolic Chamber, or the Government; and all defraud, and run there to receive absolution. But this is not enough. Leo X., in his Bull beginning with *Postquam ad Apostulatus*,* gives confessors the privilege not only of absolving robbers, but of permitting them to retain, in all good conscience, the fruits of their usuries, robberies, thefts, etc., on condition that part of the goods be given to the Church. And ought an institution, which so manifestly favours

* *Vide* Leon. Pap. X. Constit., cit. in Bullar. tom. x., p. 38 sq. Edit. Luxemburgi.

crime, to be called an institution of Jesus Christ? Ought it to be tolerated in society?

A still heavier loss, however, results to society from confession—the establishment of another kingdom in the State, another occult power, far more formidable than the civil power—the domain of conscience. But this we shall see in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

NO CIVIL PROGRESS WHATEVER IS POSSIBLE UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF CONFESSION.

THERE are two foundations on which the great machinery for the government of the Papacy relies for its support: the celibacy of the priesthood, and confession. The celibacy of the priesthood, an invention of the daring Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), has raised for the Pope an army of millions of men scattered over all the world, having neither family nor ties of country, but recognising for their country Papal Rome, and for their sovereign the Pope, from whom alone they hope for honour and preferment. Confession, a law imposed by the audacious Innocent III., has established a most astute polity in the bosom of the Roman Catholic community—a polity which tends to the maintenance of despotism and clerocracy, and from which not even sovereigns are exempt, if they are not despots such as Rome desires. Of celibacy we have spoken in an especial

work: we will now make a few observations on confession.

Confessors, in whatever part of the world they may be, are all subjects of the Pope; from him they receive the law, on him they depend. Confessors know well how to ingratiate themselves with feeble minds, over which they domineer with despotic sway; but these feeble minds are those which have the greatest influence in society: women and mere lads, under the absolute control of confessors, have an immense influence in families. Young wives, aged mothers, youthful sons and daughters, are anxious that their dear relatives should not go into eternal perdition, and they constrain them by their caresses to do the will of their confessors. But what is invariably the will of the confessors? All civil progress tends, among other effects, to expose the moral turpitude and abuses of the clergy. It closely touches the interests of confessors that such things should remain concealed, and they leave no stone unturned to place impediments in the way of civil progress. What are the books the reading of which confessors permit, or insinuate, or command? Certainly not the Bible; since it clearly makes manifest what true religion is, and condemns the impostures of the clergy: certainly not the works of the greatest philosophers; but the lives of the saints,

so-called books of devotion, which are, for the most part, masterpieces of superstition and ignorance. To a mind saturated with such reading, dexterously commented on by the confessor, every attempt at civil reform seems to be an assault upon religion; and the members of the family recoil with horror from the thought that their dear relatives should assail religion, and so consign themselves to eternal perdition; and they bring into action, under the orders of the confessor, every species of seductive art, that their relations may keep aloof from civil reforms; and thus their country, in its hour of utmost need, is deprived of the help of so many minds and hands, which, precisely because they belong to peaceful citizens and fathers of families, would be most useful by their temperate and well digested counsels. All thanks to the confessors, who, with their impostures, render their native land the excellent service of keeping it in ignorance, that they may tyrannize over it, and bring it back, were it possible, to the times of barbarism!

But this baleful race is the more dangerous that it labours in the dark, hiding under the cloak of religion the treacherous hand which stabs its native country; a malignant race which gnaws into the vitals of society to keep it in a state of emaciation and consumption, reduces it to a condition of abasement,

whence it dare not raise itself, and would have it kiss the chains of slavery, and compose panegyrics on the oppressor.

Confession in relation to society may be defined as an universal spydom, organized and complete. Confessors are not content to know the sins of those who confess, but they must learn the regulation and management of the family ; and when an ingenuous youth or an innocent maiden comes under the fangs of a knavish confessor (and which of them is not a knave ?), they do not escape till they have first revealed all the secrets of the family circle—without, however, being aware of it : even the secrets of the marriage bed are not unknown to the impertinent curiosity of confessors.

But this would be nothing : the aim of this spying system is to maintain the power of Rome ; and as papal Rome needs for its support the aid of despots,* there exists between them and Rome a horrible, sacrilegious compact, to render to each other mutual aid in oppression, the one by arms, the other by spydom. Can it be thought that I exaggerate ? Let us appeal to facts.

Scarcely had the Society of Freemasons emerged into notice, in the last century, than Rome violently

* The reader need scarcely be reminded that this was written many years before the liberation of Italy.—[*T*.]

assailed it, without knowing, even as it does not yet know, the true character of the Society: to launch its thunderbolts, it was enough to discern, however faintly, that the Society aimed at the civil regeneration of the world. The powerful engine that Rome worked against it was confession. Read the bulls of Benedict XIV., of Pius VII., of Leo XII., of Gregory XVI., against this Society,* and it will be seen that popes avail themselves of confession to crush every effort of society for its own civil regeneration. Every confessor is obliged, under the severest penalties, to impose on his penitents the obligation of denouncing to the ecclesiastical authorities whomsoever they know not only to belong to that Society or to any other having the same object, but even if they have any suspicion of it; and if the penitent refuses to denounce, he cannot receive absolution.

* Freemasons are supposed by Mr. Frost (*Secret Societies*, Introd. p. 20), to have originated as late as the seventeenth century. Le Comte de Ségur assigns them the same date, attributing their rise to a secret royalist society in the reign of Charles I. (*Hist. de l'Inquisition*, ch. iv., p. 218: Bruxelles, 1838). Had they existed sooner, they would probably have been ferreted out by the keen-scented familiars of the Inquisition, or by those bitter enemies of the Freemasons, the Jesuits (Duller, *Jesuits as they were and are*, pp. 162-3). The first bull issued against them is as late as 1738. A curious trial of a Freemason before the Inquisition of Madrid may be seen in Ségur, u. s., pt. vi., pp. 255—288.—[*T.*]

But in countries where the Inquisition exists no more, it may be replied, denunciations are not practised. The bulls provide for this case also : where the Inquisition does not exist, the denunciations are made to the bishop, or to the vicar, who transmits them to Rome, or to the sovereign of the place, or to both,—that acting in concert they may suppress every movement of liberty. The archives of the Roman Inquisition, visited by the Government of the Republic in March 1849, have furnished thousands of documents on this subject. An infinite number of denunciations of liberals by confessors were found in these infamous records ;* and almost all the liberals of the Roman states had been denounced by their family confessors, or by those of their friends. Such is the fear that Rome has of civil reform, such the abuse of her power in confession, that fathers are compelled to denounce their own sons, sons to denounce their fathers, wives to denounce their husbands, even in defiance of the laws of nature : but what law is there for despotism ?

The existence of Rome cannot be maintained without despotism ; despotism among Christians cannot keep its footing without Rome ; herein lies the reason that every despot sympathises with Papal

* See No. 79 of the *Contemporary*, a Roman journal, 7th April, 1849.

Rome; herein lies the reason that while Venice was ruled as a republic, no power ever moved against it; but no sooner did Rome purpose to throw off the papal yoke, than four powers threw themselves upon her to rend her to pieces. If the papal power falls, the Gospel will rise; and then confession, and with it the other papal inventions to maintain despotism, will fall; and, with that fallen, despotical power likewise falls.

Now, is it possible that an institution which tends to maintain society in a state of oppression can be an institution of the Son of God? Can it be part of a religion all love, all brotherhood?

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW REMISSION OF SINS IS OBTAINED IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST is our Redeemer, our only Saviour: therefore redemption and salvation must come from Him alone. The reasoning appears to me to be in rule,—the conclusion conformable to the rigorous laws of logic; let us see, however, how far this principle is based upon the Word of God.

St. Peter, "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts iv. 8, 12), speaks thus in the full Sanhedrim: "Neither is there salvation in any other" (than Jesus Christ); "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." St. John, in his first epistle (ch. ii., vers. 1, 2), addresses to us these most consolatory words—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." St. Paul,

in his Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. i., ver. 7), assures us that in Jesus Christ "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." And in the Epistle to the Colossians (ch. ii., ver. 14), he assures us that Jesus Christ "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances" (of Divine justice) "that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Therefore, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). Jesus Christ has "washed us from our sins in His own blood," says St. John (Rev. i. 5). Jesus Christ "bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter ii. 24).

But all this was predicted many ages before it happened. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah (vers. 5, 6) contains the most consoling doctrine of the remission of sins, under the new law, in a manner so clear that it leaves nothing to be desired. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The Word of God, then,

teaches us with the utmost perspicuity that remission of sins is obtained from God through Jesus Christ, who has taken on Him our sins, and has given us His infinite righteousness.

They who would believe the Gospel must, therefore, believe that we have in Jesus Christ a full satisfaction for all our sins, and, consequently, that the remission of our sins comes to us, not from confession to a priest, nor from any satisfaction of ours, but solely from the satisfaction of Jesus Christ by His infinite sacrifice on the cross.

'Very good,' says the Roman Church; 'but to participate in the merits of the satisfaction of Christ it is needful to participate in His sufferings.'

But where, we reply, where is this singular doctrine written? Certainly not in the Bible. The Bible says that Jesus Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6), and that Jesus Christ "by Himself purged our sins" (Heb. i. 3). If, therefore, Jesus Christ has given Himself, who is of infinite value, as the price of our redemption, if He has "by Himself purged our sins," He has paid for us superabundantly, and for us it only remains to apply to ourselves the price of the redemption already paid. As if a rich lord expended an enormous sum to pay all the debts of the men of some country, there would only remain to the debtors

to make themselves known to the creditor, to confess their debt, and repair to him with perfect confidence: thus to Christians it only remains to acknowledge our debt, to confess it before God our creditor, and with all confidence, calling ourselves redeemed of Jesus Christ, to present before God the infinite price of redemption. Here is the mode in which remission of sins is obtained in the Church of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ, therefore, has paid, I have not to pay anew.

'But the benefit of redemption ought to be applied to us,' says the Roman Church, 'and it is applied by means of confession.' Where is that written in the Divine Word? we reply. It is for God, not for men, to propound the conditions of the remission of sins. That God has not assigned such a condition, we have demonstrated in Chapters II. and III. of this essay: besides which the Bible tells us distinctly how we ought to apply to ourselves the redemption of Jesus Christ; and the sole condition which He has annexed to the application of the merits of Jesus Christ, and of His redemption, is faith. "To as many as believe on the name of Jesus Christ, gave He power to become the sons of God," says St. John (ch. i. 12). "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." "Whoso-

ever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." These are the doctrines of Jesus concerning justification (John iii. 36; vi. 47; xi. 25, 26).

The doctrine of the apostles on such an important argument is the same. When St. Paul was asked by the Philippian gaoler (Acts xvi. 30, 31), what he mnst do to be saved, Paul did not answer that he should confess his sins to him, but said instead, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." But more clearly does he exclude any other condition than faith from justification and remission of sins, when in his epistles he teaches the first believers the manner of obtaining the pardon of sin. In the Epistle to the Romans (ch. iii. 24—28) the apostle explains, with the greatest imaginable perspicuity, the doctrine of the remission of sins, and of justification by faith alone, and not by any works. Here are his words: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness; that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is

boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The condition, then, which God has prescribed for remitting our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, is not confession, nor any of our works, but only faith in Christ Jesus.

The same doctrine is further inculcated by the apostle in these terms: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5). And in ch. v. 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And in ch. ii. 16 of the Epistle to the Galatians, he speaks thus: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." But if Jesus Christ had proposed the declaration of our faults to a man, as conditional to justification, could the apostles have thus clearly excluded all works from justification, and assigned as the sole condition, faith alone in Jesus Christ?

But let those who set a high value on the doctrines of the Popes, hearken how St. Peter, who, according to them, was the first of the Popes, thought on this subject. Under solemn circumstances, when for the first time he preached to the Gentiles (Acts x. 42, 43), he assures us that he, as all the other apostles, had received express commandment from God to teach—according to the testimony, likewise, of all the prophets—that remission of sins was obtained solely by faith in Jesus Christ, and by nothing else. Here are his solemn words : "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. And to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." What, then, have I to seek for more, if God Himself in His Word assures me that I can obtain pardon of all my sins by believing in Jesus Christ ?

Faith, therefore—but a living faith, a faith working by love (Gal. v. 6), not the confession of our sins to a man like ourselves—is that which justifies before God. This is the teaching which Jesus Christ has left to His Church ; whosoever shall teach otherwise will be Antichrist, the preacher of another gospel—the gospel of man, not the Gospel of God.

CONCLUSION.

CONSTRAINED by the limits which I have proposed to myself, to put an end to this slight essay on Confession, to you, my dear fellow-countrymen, do I now in an especial manner direct my words. It is to you I have dedicated this little work, not because I hope from you any recompense: for many, even of you, will be offended at my words, and will seek, with the opprobrious name of *Apostate*, to bring reproach upon me among the fanatics; but so did the Pharisees with St. Paul, who had abandoned their sect to follow the lessons of Jesus Christ. This is not the place to frame my apology; I only suggest that the name of *apostate* befits those who abandon the Christian religion, not those who profess the faith of Jesus Christ as it was professed by the apostles and Christians of the earliest times. Let these gentlemen demonstrate that the religion of the apostles is that of the Popes of the nineteenth century; that then, as now, images and relics were adored, masses chanted for the living and the dead, confessions practised, indulgences sold, and then we will peacefully submit to the appellation of *apostate;* but if, instead, they have made additions to the Gospel, in such a manner as to form an entirely different

religion, or rather a religion totally opposed to this of the Gospel, they rather—let them submit to it in peace—will be the *apostates*.

Others, to discredit me, will assert that my pen is sold. The Romans who know me personally are incapable of believing such a calumny. Had I been inclined to sell myself, I should have sold myself to the Popes, who pay most generously with preferments and dignities those priests who sell their conscience to exalt the Papacy. I was in the mart—I was at Rome: if I had wished to sell myself, I should not have quitted it.

No, Italians: your good alone, the good of our dear country, has moved me to write this little essay. The system of confession is to the last degree ruinous to our country, which will never be able to rise again as long as that discipline endures. The Utopia most fatal to nations is to separate political from religious regeneration; to desire political liberty, and not show the slightest regard for religion. Religion is the soul of a nation: the Gospel is the Divine code of man; and till the Gospel triumphs, the triumph will be with despots, tyrants, and hypocrites.

What benefit, in fact, has Papal Catholicism conferred on us? Our Machiavelli tells us: It has divided and enslaved Italy, and put forth its utmost

efforts to keep it divided and enslaved; it has destroyed in the generality of Italians all religious feeling; on the ruins of the Gospel of Christ it has constructed a religious system after its own fashion, that it may domineer with despotic sway.* Despotism and tyranny are loudly condemned by the Gospel; but the Popes, in order to be despots and tyrants, and to raise crowned pupils for their school, have substituted their decrees for the Gospel. To lull the people to sleep, they have prohibited the reading of the Gospel; and the nations, ignorant of the holy precepts of Christ, and believing that the Popes, who called themselves His vicars, acted according to the precepts of that religion of which they pronounced themselves the head, have conceived a deep-seated hatred for a religion which is the support of despotism and tyranny, and the fountain of infinite evils. Infidels, profiting by such a disposition of the nations, have disseminated their irreligious principles; and to the Popes must be attributed the irreligion of the nations.

Nor can it be alleged that certain Popes have misused religion, and that the abuses ought therefore

* A similar passage in the tenth book of Guicciardini's History, carefully suppressed in Roman Catholic editions, may be seen in Brent's Translation of Paolo Sarpi's "History of the Council of Trent," p. 839: fol., Lond., 1629.—[*T.*]

to be attributed to the individual, and not to the system. From Sylvester to our time, all the Popes, some more some less, have contributed to transform the religion of Jesus Christ, and to build up the system of oppression and political annihilation on the ruins of liberty and progress. Nay, the very Popes who have been most conspicuous in this work of destruction are adored as heroes on the altars of Rome.

Who is not acquainted with the more than Satanic pride of Gregory VII.? He is the ideal of despotism; in comparison with him Nero might have been termed liberal. Who does not know his godless maxims, which still serve as guides to the popes under the title of *dictatus Papæ?** Well, Gregory VII. is on the altars of Rome; and the ferocious Ghislieri (Pius V.), who, in the name of God and of the religion of the Gospel, taught the despot Charles IX. that he could never obtain from God the pardon of his sins if he did not shed, without the slightest compunction, the blood of his subjects who asked for the pure Gospel,—is not he also on the altars of Rome? In canonizing such men the Popes have canonized their doctrine; hence it cannot be said that despotism, obscuration, the oppression of nations, and hatred for any kind of progress, exist through

* Appendix K.

the mal-practice of any one of the Popes; they exist by the very system of the Papacy.

In fact, let us open the Gospel, and bring it face to face with the decrees of the Popes, to see at a glance not only their discrepancy, but palpable contradiction. The Gospel establishes equality among men, all sons of the same Divine Father, and all brethren to each other, and forbids calling any on this earth our father: "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 9); but the Pope not only has himself called father, but "most holy father"; and while Jesus Christ, speaking to God the Father, calls Him "holy Father," the Pope, not content with making himself like God, will be more than God, and has himself called "most holy father." The Gospel says that our only Master, our only Teacher, is Christ, and that none of His disciples ought to aspire to be master or teacher of his brethren (Ibid. 8, 10); but the Popes call themselves teachers of the whole Church, and infallible teachers. The Gospel absolutely excludes any dominion after the manner of the dominion of kings (Matt. xx. 25—28); but the Popes call themselves not only like kings, but greatly superior to them, and lords over all the nations.* The Gospel says

* Pius V., that most humble Dominican, thus commences one

(John x.) that the good shepherd ought to give his life for his sheep; but the Popes, to establish their dominion, have butchered them by the million.* But among so many Popes, has there been one, one only, who has deplored such abuses? Therefore the corruption of religion ought not to be attributed to abuse of it by the individual, but to the system; therefore the system ought to be reformed; therefore the Gospel ought to reign in its purity, and ought to be delivered from this its great enemy; and Italy and Rome ought to confer upon the world this

of his Bulls: "*Romanus Pontifex in excelso militantis ecclesiæ solio* SUPER GENTES ET REGNA CONSTITUTUS," etc. [The Roman Pontiff established above the nations and kingdoms on the exalted throne of the Church militant, etc.] The Fathers of the fifth Lateran Council called Leo X. king of kings and lord of lords—*rex regum, et dominus dominantium.* But to know the sublime degree of arrogance which Popes have reached, the collections of the bulls and decrees of the Popes should be consulted. These documents are always there to bear testimony to the abuse of the Gospel by the Popes.

* In Spain alone the Inquisition, in 327 years, condemned 440,921 unhappy victims (see Llorente, *History of the Inquisition*). Add to this amount the victims of the Inquisitions of Portugal, of France, of Flanders, of Italy, of the Indies, the hundreds of thousands of Waldensians, Albigensians, and so many other Christians, who wished to live according to the purity of the Gospel, the hundreds of thousands of victims of the crusades against Christians, and the slaughters of America, and it will be seen that the sheep butchered to gratify the ambition and interest of this good shepherd amount to many millions!!!

great benefit of despoiling the Popes of their usurped power, and re-establishing on the ruins of the Papacy the pure religion of Christ. O Rome! thou hast involuntarily wrought grievous damage to the human race, by harbouring within thy walls, and seating on the throne of the Cæsars, the man who with lying promises first reduced thee to nothingness, and afterwards established himself as universal despot; to thee, therefore, does it belong to deliver the world from its oppressor, the Gospel from its persecutor. Let thy Pope remain thy Bishop, but within the compass assigned to him by Christ; let him be such as the Gospel commands him to be; let him be the scourge of tyrants, like an Ambrose, and not their perpetual confederate; let him be the consoler of the afflicted, as his Divine Master prescribes; let him be the deliverer of slaves, and not the fabricator of new chains; let him teach the religion of love, and not of hatred; let him promote worship in spirit and in truth, and not hypocrisy, superstition, and imposture; let him preach the pure Gospel, and not his own antichristian institutes; let him show himself a follower of Christ by works corresponding to the Gospel, and not with a lying tongue proclaim himself the Vicar of Christ, dishonouring His holy law, and turning it to his own advantage: and then will he have a right to our respect, to our gratitude.

The destinies of nations are in the hand of God; and without the aid of His powerful arm in vain does a nation arise to burst its fetters; after a long struggle it will fall back more oppressed than before, doomed to endure the scorn of the tyrant oppressor who has riveted its chains. Let Italy wrest their unlimited power from the Popes; let her reduce them to their pristine establishment, and she will rise to happiness; let her proclaim the pure Gospel, and she will see all her sons unite together in the bonds of unbroken brotherhood—of the brotherhood sealed with the blood of the Man-God; let her proclaim the pure Gospel, and she will see her priests vanish, like the birds of night at the dawning of the sun; she will see the doctrines and practices of the Papacy disappear, which reduce man to the degradation of his intellectual faculties, to hypocrisy, superstition, infidelity—the means employed by the clergy for their own exaltation and the oppression of the people.

In short, let the people come to know true evangelical religion, and the deceptive papal omnipotence will fall shattered to pieces. Let the people come to know that Christ has reserved to Himself the government of His Church, that He governs His Church, sitting as Man-God at the right hand of the Father; that He purposes to be alone its Head

(Eph. v. 23; Col. i. 18); and the Pope will have to cease from his usurpation as head of the Church. Let the people come to know that the sacrifice of Christ is of infinite value; that once offered on Golgotha He has fully and for ever sanctified His sons; that Christ is ever living; that His priesthood "passeth not to another"; that His sacrifice ought never to be renewed; and then will be dried up that fountain of wealth to the priests—the mass. Let the people come to know that the blood of Jesus Christ, shed for us, is that which alone cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7), and at the knowledge of this consolatory truth what will then become of the Pontifical inventions of purgatory, confessions, indulgences—inventions which have exhausted the purses of nations to fatten that of the priests, and which have been powerful instruments of despotism and tyranny?

The present essay on confession points only to one of the many errors of the Church of Rome, with which it tramples genius in the dust, lords it over nations, imposes fetters on them, and renders them callous to slavery. The worship of images, the mass, purgatory, celibacy, and all the other anti-evangelical doctrines of the Roman Church, tend to no other object than to dominion for itself and its confederates, the despots, and to the oppression of

the nations. Would to God that Italy may some day be enlightened, and detect the worm that gnaws its vitals—the religion of the Popes, and the only means of its resurrection—the proclamation of the Gospel!

My fellow-countrymen, when we shake off the yoke of the Pope, we will not abandon the religion of our forefathers, the Divine religion of Jesus Christ. We have not to make ourselves Protestants, we have not to follow the doctrines of Luther, of Calvin, or of any other of the Reformers; we have not to attach ourselves to the Church of England, the Church of Germany, the Church of Geneva; but we must be Christians as our fathers were—as Clement of Rome, as Justin the philosopher, and all the others who in the first ages followed the pure doctrine of the Gospel as it was preached by the holy apostles. We will not follow Luther and Calvin, but Jesus Christ, with His Gospel in our hands,—and the holy apostles with their teachings. We ought not to impose on ourselves the doctrines of any National Church, but the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is the priests who, to beguile the simple-minded, go about, saying that they who preach the Gospel in Italy would have the Italians abandon the religion of their fathers, and would make Protestants of them all.

Italians! after the facts that have occurred from 1847 to the present time, will you believe your priests any more? After the Encyclical of the 8th December,* will you continue to believe that Catholicism is compatible with liberty and progress?

But as far as regards our subject, what conclusions does it remain for us to draw? Confession is not enjoined in the Word of God; therefore whoever believes in God and in Jesus Christ may dispense with that practice. It is contrary to the Word of God; therefore a Christian ought absolutely to abstain from confession as from a thing opposed to the Divine will; and as the doing of anything contrary to the will of God is an act of rebellion against God, so to subject oneself to confession will be reprehensible and sinful in a Christian. Confession is contrary to the practice of the primitive Church; therefore whoever would be a Christian as our fathers were, ought to reject a practice introduced by the priests for their own interest. Confession was invented by men; therefore it can have no place

* In the Encyclical and accompanying Syllabus the claims of papal supremacy over civil jurisdiction and authority throughout the Christian world are as positively, if not so violently, asserted by Pio Nono, as by Gregory VII. in the dark ages. A dispassionate review of the spirit and tendency of the two documents may be seen in Mr. T. Ad. Trollope's recently published Life of Pius IX., vol. II., B. iv., ch. ii., pp. 133, sq.—[*T.*]

in a Divine religion. Confession is opposed to right reason; therefore every reasonable man ought to abstain from it. Confession is injurious to the faith; therefore whoever loves the Gospel and its religion ought to abandon it. It is contrary to morality; every virtuous man ought firmly to keep himself, and all who are under his influence, aloof from such a practice. Confession hinders all civil progress; therefore any man who loves his country ought to exert himself to the utmost that the practice be abolished.

But we are all sinners, and have need of pardon. It is true; therefore let us repair to Him who alone has the power to pardon: let us repair to the Lamb of God, to Him who alone taketh away the sin of the world (John i. 29), to Him who is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. ii. 5); and by faith in Him we shall obtain pardon of our sins. Let us resort no more to man, a sinner, to procure pardon; but let us resort to God alone, by means of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; a criminal does not have recourse to a fellow-criminal to have the pardon of his crime.

Italians! one word more, and I finish. Is it true liberty that ye seek? Well, learn not from men with what means to seek it; learn it from the Man-God, from the Divine Benefactor of humanity—from

Christ. Behold the consoling words which He addressed to His new followers (John viii. 31, 32): "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Down, then, with the impostures of the priests; let truth arise in her purity, and we shall be free. These are the words of Christ, —of Him who hath sworn that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away (Matt. xxiv. 35), because they are the words of Him who cannot deceive, nor be deceived.

To destroy, therefore, and to build,—this is the mission of a Christian people which seeks its true good, its true happiness: to destroy all that the priest has built upon the most pure law of the Gospel; to build Christianity upon the Gospel alone, as our forefathers did,—who with no other arms beside the Gospel, destroyed the immense colossus of Roman tyranny. Superstition is the weapon which despots have ever used, and still use, to tyrannize over the people;* therefore Jesus Christ established His worship in spirit

* Even in the time of Livy it was a known fact that tyrants, leagued with priests, domineered over the people, and oppressed it by means of superstition: "*Nulla res multitudinem efficacius regit quam superstitio.*" [No more effectual instrument exists for governing the multitude than superstition.]—Tit. Liv. in Num. l. i.

and in truth (John iv. 23). Let the worship of Christ, the religion of Christ, be our worship, our religion; let the Gospel be the book of our affections, and we shall know the truth, we shall overthrow error, and the truth which proceeds from God will make us free, and free for ever.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

(p. xi.)

THE RIGHT OF CALUMNY.

THE extent to which the right of calumniating an opponent is claimed and exercised by Romanists, would be incredible were it not incontestibly authenticated. The right of calumny the Jesuits openly avow and justify. "It is only a venial sin," they say, "to calumniate and impute false charges, to ruin the credit of those who speak ill of us."* And under that head they include everything, however true, that can diminish their reputation.†

The following is the open profession of one of their most distinguished members:‡—

"I have maintained, and still maintain, that calumny against a calumniator, *though it be a falsehood*, is neither a mortal sin, nor contrary to justice nor to charity. To prove it, I have cited a multitude of our fathers, and whole universities composed of them, all of whom I have consulted; and amongst them Father J. Gans, confessor of the Emperor; Father D. Bastele, confessor of the Archduke Leopold; Father Henri, formerly tutor of these two princes; and all the public and ordinary professors of the Universities of Vienna, Gratz, and Prague. Of all these I possess, written and signed by their own hands, approvals of my opinion; besides these the preacher of the Emperor and of the King of Spain," etc., etc.

The testimony of the famous Caramuel is to the same effect (n. 1151),—"That it is not a mortal sin to calumniate falsely for the preservation of one's honour"; adding, "If this doctrine is not probable, there is scarcely one that is so in the whole circle of theology." So also do many of their canonists and theologians affirm, "That if any one brings against us a *true*, but unjust reproach, we may assert that he has lied, and is a shameless

* Pascal, *Lett. Prov.* xv., vol. iv., p. 165: Amst., 1767.

† Ib., vol. i., p. 67.

‡ Dicastillus, *De Just.*, l. ii., tr. 2, disp. 12, n. 404.

calumniator."* By "unjust," Jesuitical doctrine understands anything that sullies the glory of their Society.† Proneness to calumny points to weakness of argument; hence the persistent assertion of a privilege of which they stand so much in need. Being enabled by their principles to traduce with a safe conscience, no wonder that they should take a pleasure in indulging in so easy and convenient a process.

There is an amusing anecdote in Pascal ‡ of a M. Puys, who was supposed to have aimed some disparaging observations at the Jesuits, and was, in consequence, denounced as "infamous for his immoralities, suspected of impiety, a heretic, excommunicated, and deserving to be burnt alive"; but no sooner was it discovered that the Society of Loyola in particular was not intended, than he was pronounced, on the same authority, to be a person of "eminent intelligence, profound learning, orthodox opinions, and morals irreproachable."

But, it may be urged, these are the opinions of individual Jesuits, not of the whole Society. No Jesuit, however, is permitted to publish, unless with the permission of the General and of at least three censors, eminent for their learning and judgment in that especial department of knowledge.§ The opinion, therefore, of one Jesuit, much more of a large number of them, may be legitimately treated as that of the whole Society. More than that, Roman Catholic teaching in morals, as Dr. Howson very seasonably observes,‖ is now Jesuit teaching—the text-books in almost all Romanist countries having been lately changed with a view to that object.¶ "We are all Jesuits now," was the public declaration of a French bishop; and no one contradicted him.** At all events, in their general habit of calumniating, Romanists and Jesuits are, and always have been, indistinguishable. What would be thought if Queen Victoria were to write to the University of Oxford, and rebuke its divines for their slanderous habits? And yet this is precisely what was done by Francis I. to the Theological Faculty in the University of Paris.†† It is observable, too, that, nearly at the same time, Jac. Langæus, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and some unprincipled colleagues in wickedness, were heaping infamous calumnies on

* Wendrock [M. Nicole] on Pasçal, *Lett. Prov.* xv., vol. iv., p. 220.

† *Hist. des Provinciales*, p. 67.

‡ Let. xv., vol. iv., p. 173, sq.

§ *Constitutiones Societatis Jesu*, P. iii., c. xi., § 18, and P. ii., c. iv., § 11: Rom., 1558, and Lond., 1838.

‖ *Sacramental Confession*, p. 40.

¶ L'Abbé E. Michaud, *De la Falsification des Catéchismes Français et des Manuels de Théologie, par le Parti Romaniste:* Par., 1872.

** Michelet, *Le Prêtre*, etc., p. 4.

†† Michelet, *La Reforme*, ch. xvi., p. 262.

the head of the excellent B. Ochino.* Nor does the illustrious Scipio di Ricci, the virtuous and highly-talented bishop of Pistoia, hesitate to designate calumnies as "the customary arms of the Roman curia."† Michelet, also, a writer well qualified by his extensive historical researches to give a trustworthy opinion on the subject, delivers his testimony to the same effect.‡ And who is ignorant of the foul aspersions so copiously showered upon Luther and Calvin, Zwingle and Melancthon, Huss and Jerome, Knox, Wycliffe and Cranmer? Such shameful and baseless falsehoods are the glory and rejoicing of the bigoted and illiterate, and their last resource. "Overcome by truth you resort to calumnies" is an observation of Jerome's that need not be restricted to Helvidius.§

APPENDIX B.

(p. xviii.)

HIRELING BISHOPS AT TRENT.

THIS was the precise sum paid by His Holiness to certain hireling bishops engaged to secure a working majority in the Council of Trent. Hence the remark made by Dudith, bishop of Tinia, and afterwards of Five-Churches, not without a tinge of the want of reverence for Scripture characteristic of the Roman hierarchy,—that the Holy Spirit, if He descended at all upon the Council, certainly came down from Rome in the Roman post-bag. Pallavicino (xvi., x., 12), erroneously attributes the saying to M. de Lansac, ambassador of France; but it is assigned to its true author by M. R. St. Hilaire *(Hist. d'Espagne*, viii., 888 '9), is introduced as Dudith's in the *History of the Protestant Church of Hungary*, ch. x., p. 78; and is appended to Brent's translation of Paolò Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent* (p. 841 in English, and p. 881 in Latin: fol., Lond., 1629), in a letter from Dudith to the Emperor Maximilian II. As the result of Dudith's attendance at the Council, he resigned his bishopric, and became a Protestant.‖ His modesty, probity,

* Benrath, *B. Ochino*, ch. vi., pp. 149, 152; Bayle, *Dict. Crit. et Hist.*, *s. v. Beda*, n. (A.)

† De Potter, *Mémoires de Scipion de Ricci*, t. ii., ch. xlix., p. 221: Par., 1826.

‡ Michelet, *Le Prêtre*, ch. iv., p. 81.

§ "*Arbitror te veritate superatum ad maledicta converti.*"—Hieron. contra Helvid.

‖ Krasinski, *Sketch of the Reformation in Poland*, vol. ii., ch. xiv., p. 385, n.

and amiable disposition are well described by Paulus Manutius (Lett. iv., 6). Among the names usually suppressed by Roman Catholic editors, on the system of the "occult censure," that of Dudith is prominent by its frequent omission (Gibbings, *Martyrdom of Carnesecchi*, p. xi. See also McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, Works, vol. iii., ch. v., p. 177: Edin., 1856.

APPENDIX C.

(pp. 7 and 20.)

ABSOLUTION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE interpretations of the two passages by Desanctis correspond, the one to the remission of sins as proclaimed at the opening of the Morning and Evening Services, by the ministers of the Church of England, and granted, not by themselves, but by their merciful Lord, to all who "truly repent and unfeignedly believe": the other is parallel to the Absolution in the Visitation of the Sick. On the first of these forms of prayer there is no need to dwell. It has only to be read with candour, and it is at once evident that it is the "Almighty God," and not the priest, who "pardoneth and absolveth."

The second form, in which the priest pronounces those startling words, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," demands a more attentive consideration; for, that a frail and ephemeral creature, himself a sinful being (1 John i. 8), should dare, on any pretence whatever, to usurp the prerogative of the Most High, eject the Almighty from His throne, assume the sceptre of the Great Judge, and forestalling the final judgment, admit to heaven as guiltless a man with whose heart certainly, and perhaps his life and conversation, he is unacquainted, is an assumption of authority as irreconcilable to reason as it is contradictory to the spirit and letter of revelation.

Every one is aware that passages severed from the context may convey a very different meaning from that which they legitimately bear when connected with what precedes and follows; and this undoubtedly is a passage of the kind. The subjects referred to immediately before are all earthly—the sick man's "goods," his "will," his debts," his "executors," his "temporal estates," or "offences" given or received on the part of his fellow-Christians, which he is to pardon, or sue for their pardon. It is not directly the love of God, but "charity with the world," that is in question. That a community of true Christians would be anxious to impart to a penitent the

comfortable assurance that his offences against them were sincerely forgiven, cannot admit of doubt. And the weightier the matter that troubled his conscience, the more earnestly would they desire to relieve it. For this reason the members of the Church delegate to their minister the office of assuring the sick or dying man that they absolve him of any sin he has committed against them; and in their name, and as their representative, the priest pronounces the absolution. That this is its character is still more evident from what follows. For how could it be said, in the prayer that immediately ensues, that the sick person "most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness," if his offences against his Heavenly Father, as well as those against his brethren, had been forgiven but a minute before? How could the minister add further, in the same prayer, "Impute not to him his former sins," if the sins which he begged might not be imputed were of the same kind as those from which he had just been absolved? In that case absolution, to give any comfortable assurance, would have to be repeated from minute to minute. But such a supposition would be too absurd. The absolution, therefore, of the penitent has no further reference than to his position as a true member of the Church; and, in accordance with this view, the ensuing prayer begs that he may retain the Church communion, which, if previously forfeited, had just been restored to him: "Preserve and *continue* this sick member in the unity of the Church."

Is it imaginable that the compilers of the Liturgy should have been so inconsistent, or so utterly oblivious, as to employ, in the same sense, the terms, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," in the Visitation of the Sick, and "Most merciful Father, ... *to Thee only* it appertaineth to forgive our sins," in the Commination Service? To condemn or absolve offences committed against the majesty of the Most High they well know not to be the office of creatures of the dust, but of Him only who is appointed to be Judge of the quick and the dead. Herein, as in every other point where the Church of England differs from that of Rome, are we in unison with the Christian Church of the purest ages. "Let no one deceive himself," says the venerable Cyprian, about A.D. 250: "He who bore our sins can alone bestow forgiveness of sins which have been committed against Him" (Cyprian, *De Laps.*, Opera, vol. i., p. 129). So also Firmilianus, Bishop of Cæsarea, about the same time: "*Not as if they received from us the forgiveness of their sins*, but that they may be brought by us to a consciousness of their sins" (Cyprian, Ep. lxxv.). Thus, too, the Church of Rome, writing, in her better days, to the Church of Carthage: "We exhort them to be penitent, if they may thus be able to receive *pardon from Him who alone can bestow it*" (Neander, *Church History*, vol. i., p. 250: Lond., 1842). "Man may pray, but God pardons," is the

language of Ambrose (*De Spir. Sancto*, l. iii., c. 18). "Some bishops and presbyters," says Jerome, "assume to themselves something of the supercilious pride of the Pharisees, so as to imagine that they have power to damn the innocent, or absolve the guilty; whereas before God the thing that is inquired into is the life of the accused, and not the sentence of the priest" (Hob. Seymour, *The Confessional*, ch. xi., p. 127).

In strict accordance with the divines of the primitive Church are those of the reformed Church of England. Becon, in referring to our fathers in popish times, speaks of "the miserable state they were in when they were tempted to put affiance in auricular confession, and in whispering absolution of the papists, believing our sins straightway to be forgiven, if *Ego absolvo*" [I absolve thee] "were once spoken. . . . . We know now that *God alone absolveth, and freely forgiveth us for Christ's sake if we repent and believe*" (Becon, *Jewel of Joy*, pp. 412, 414, Parker Soc. ed.).

Again: "If any man sitteth in the temple of God, boasting himself as God, surely they do it which take upon them the office of God—that is, remit and retain sins" (Becon, *Castle of Comfort*, p. 556).

And so Hooker: "When the offence doth stand only between God and man's conscience, the counsel is good which Chrysostom giveth—'I wish thee not to bewray thyself publicly, nor to accuse thyself before others. I wish thee to obey the prophet, who saith, "Disclose thy ways unto the Lord, confess thy sins before Him, tell thy sins to Him, that He may blot them out. *Let God alone see thee at thy confession*"'" (Hooker, Keble's ed., vol. iii., p. 54). Again: "*We* teach, above all things, *that* repentance which is one and the same from the beginning to the world's end; *they* a sacramental repentance of their own devising and shaping. We labour to instruct men in such sort that every soul which is wounded with sin may learn how to cure itself" (Ibid., vol. iii., p. 74).

And Bishop Coverdale: "To be discharged or unbound is when the mind that hath despaired of health and salvation is lift up to an assured and undoubted hope. To bind is to leave the obstinate and unbelieving mind to itself" (Works, Parker Society, p. 373).

And Bishop Jewel: "The power, as well of loosing as also of binding, standeth in God's Word; and the exercise or execution of the same standeth either in preaching, or else in sentence of correction and ecclesiastical discipline" ("Defence of Apology," p. 362, Parker Society ed.)

Again, in the "Apology": "And we say that the power of loosing consists in this—that the minister, *by the preaching of the Gospel*, offers to dejected minds and true penitents, through the merits of Christ, absolution; and doth assure them a certain

remission of their sins, and the hopes of eternal salvation; or, secondly, restores and receives into the congregation and unity of the faithful those penitents who, by grievous scandal or known and public offences, have offended the minds of their brethren, and, in à sort, alienated and separated themselves from the common society of the Church and body of Christ. And we say the minister doth exercise the power of binding or shutting, when he shutteth the gate of the kingdom of heaven against unbelievers and obstinate persons, and denounceth to them the vengeance of God and eternal punishment, or excludeth out of the bosom of the Church those that are publicly excommunicated."

It should be remembered that the works of Jewel were all but adopted by Convocation as an authorized exposition of the doctrines of the Church of England; that Queen Elizabeth set so high a value on her divine,—"my Jewel," as she used to call him,—that she ordered his "Defence of the Apology" to be placed in every parish church in England; that James I., Charles I., and four successive archbishops observed the same rule; and that "The Apology" was among the "ornaments" of the church inquired after in episcopal visitations (Dean Howson, "Before the Table," p. 76).

To the same purport as the above is the Catechism of 1553: "To this Church belong the keys wherewith heaven is locked and unlocked; for that is done by the ministration of the Word, whereunto properly appertaineth the power to bind and loose, to hold for guilty, and to forgive sins. So that whosoever believeth the Gospel preached in this Church, he shall be saved, but whosoever believeth not, he shall be damned."

In close conformity is the Westminster Confession of Faith: "To the officers" (of the Church) "the keys of the kingdom are committed; by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut the kingdom of God against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures, and to open it to penitent sinners by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures."

Of course the power of forgiving and retaining sins, communicated to priests in the Ordination Service, does not extend beyond what is prescribed in the other formularies of the Church.

APPENDIX D.

(p. 9.)

SOPHISTRIES OF BELLARMINE.

AFTER the above specimens of Bellarmine's sophistical style of argumentation, the reader will be disposed to accept Jeremy Taylor's description of him, as "he that answers all things, whether he can or no" (*The Real Presence*, section 7, p. 538: Oxford, 1836). Nor is the learned Bishop singular in his opinion. The shifty Cardinal is described by Mr. Gee, on the Sacraments, as "one who knows not what to say, and yet will be saying something" (Gibson, *Pres.*, vol. viii., p. 141: Lond., 1848). Fixing on the same feature of his character, Mr. Payne (*Communion on one Kind*) depicts him as "one over-hasty to catch at anything that might help him in his straits." So disgusted was Joseph Scaliger with Bellarmine's literary and theological dishonesty, that he does not hesitate to pass this stern judgment on him: "Bellarmine believes nothing of what he writes; he is plainly an atheist" (*Scaligerana*, p. 225, in Dr. Wordsworth's *Sequel of Letters to M. Gondon*, ii., p. 14). Bellarmine, in fact, was more of a sophist than a theologian. Victory, not truth, was his object; and provided he achieved the temporary semblance of a triumph, he cared not at what cost of truth it was purchased. Willet alone, in his *Synopsis Papismi*, exhibits in about a dozen pages upwards of forty samples of palpable self-contradictions (vol. x., p. 248, sq.: Lond., 1852). James, in his *Corruptions of the Scriptures, etc.*, produces a plentiful crop of similar instances. Bayle points to this dark spot in the Cardinal's polemical character (*Dict. Crit., art. Bellarmin.*, n. [D]). Other instances may be seen in Tyler, *Image Worship*, P. iii., ch. ii., p. 143; or Id., *Worship of the Virgin*, P. ii., ch. iv., p. 165-6; or Id., *Primitive Christian Worship*, P. i., ch. iv., sec. xi., p. 180, sq., and in various other authors whom it would be long to adduce. Hence Hospinianus says, "With respect to Bellarmine and his practice, I, with many others, have observed this in reading his books—that when he is pressed with an objection of weight, he does not care a jot whether the solution he gives of it is inconsistent with what he has written elsewhere, provided only it serves him for the nonce, and may afford him an outlet through which he may creep for the present" (*Hist. Jesuit.*, p. 240).

To the Cardinal, as well as to a certain Regius Professor at Oxford, may be most appropriately applied the pithy observation of Pascal, "In truth, my reverend fathers, you have found the

way to make yourselves believed as long as you remain unanswered, but the way to make yourselves disbelieved for ever as soon as you have received an answer" (*Prov. Lett.*, xv., vol. iv., p. 181 : Amst., 1767). The names of Bellarmine and Dr. Pusey cannot fail to go down to posterity as two of the most dishonest, and consciously dishonest disputants, both in argument and quotation, that were ever engaged in theological controversy.

Bellarmine has been commended, indeed, for his candour in stating the objections of opponents. But it was the pride of a dialectician exulting in his skill in fence. If candid in stating objections, he was most uncandid in answering them. His dishonesty in citing, as genuine, writings that he must have known to be forgeries, is notorious. For instances, see Janus, *Pope and Council*, ch. iii., sect. 20, p. 288, n.[1]; n.[3], sect. 31, pp. 393,'4',5,'6, 399. Even the pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, and the pseudo-Dionysius, now unanimously recognised by Romanists to be spurious, he calls to his assistance (Ib., pp. 394, 401). Nor does he disdain, at a pinch, the Pontifical of Damasus, whose defence other Romanists have abandoned as desperate (Gibbings, *Roman Forgeries*, p. xxi.; Soames, *Latin Church*, pp. 218,'9). He makes use of a Vulgate error in opposition to the Hebrew, Septuagint, Chaldee Paraphrase, the version of the Roman Catholic Vatablus, and some of his brother Jesuits (Desanctis, *La Messa*, pp. 59, 60: Roma, 1872); he cites the spurious "Martyrdom of St. Andrew" (Ib., p. 82; Allix, *Churches of Piedmont*, ch. iii., p. 20; Gibson, *Pres.*, vol. xv., p. 250, sq.; Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, vol. x., p. 41), the spurious Antichrist of Hippolytus (Desanctis, *La Messa*, p. 82; Goode, *Rule of Faith*, vol. i., ch. v., p. 240, n [8]). In short, like many of his Roman brethren, he accepts or rejects the fathers and church historians at his convenience (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, vol. x., p. 171; Gibbings, *Roman Forgeries*, p. xx., sq.). His misquotations and mistranslations it would be wearisome to follow. When other resources failed, he would substitute inventions for truths, fictions for facts, guesses for realities; seeming from his pride of place to think "his own privileges to be very great, or his adversaries' memories and judgments to be very small;" and hence he got himself involved in shameful blunders, of which Dr. Hody alone exposed no inconsiderable number, in his accurate and classic work, *De Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus*, etc.

The fate of Bellarmine was a chequered one. Twice was he all but elected Pope (Bayle, *Dict. Crit.*, *art. Bellarmin*, n. [x]). Once was he all but canonized (De Potter, *Vie de Scipion de Ricci*, t. iv., p. 302). He had elevated the spiritual pre-eminence of the Pope to such a height as to assert that "If the Pope were to err by prescribing vices and forbidding virtues, the Church would be bound to believe vices to be good and virtues evil, unless it chose to sin against conscience" (*De Rom. Pont.*, iv., 5).

He had exaggerated the Pope's temporal power to such a degree as to affirm "That the Pope, as Pope, though he has no mere temporal authority, yet has, in order to spiritual good, supreme power of disposing of the temporal things of all Christians" (Ib. v., 6). And again: "As regards persons, the Pope cannot, as Pope, ordinarily depose temporary princes, even for just causes, in the same way as he deposes bishops—that is, as ordinary judge; nevertheless, as supreme spiritual prince, he can change kingdoms, and take them from one sovereign and bestow them on another, if that be necessary to the weal of souls," etc. (Ib. v., 6). But these claims, however exorbitant, were insufficient to satisfy the cupidity and ambition of Sixtus V., who put Bellarmine's name in the Prohibitory Index for not going far enough, while he was condemned by the Doctors of the Sorbonne for going too far (Gibbings, *Fulgentio Manfridi*, p. 45). Proscription in the Index was a bitter mortification to the Cardinal after his lifelong labours in the service of the Papacy; and on hearing of the death of Sixtus, vehemently did he give vent to his deep-seated feelings of resentment: "Conceptis verbis, quantum sapio, quantum capio, quantum intelligo, descendit ad infernum." ["I solemnly protest that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, his Holiness has descended to——"] a place that need not be named; but as much worse than purgatory in the creed of the Cardinal as infinite is than finite misery. But, at the worst, Sixtus would only be in the same predicament as all his predecessors, if we may rely on Pope Adrian IV.: "Non video quomodo qui hunc altissimum locum tenent salvari possint" ["I see not how it is possible that those should be saved who occupy this exalted position"] (Onuphr., *De Vit. Marcelli*, ii., in Suppl. ad Platin., p. 419: Colon., 1611). More attention is due at the present moment to the character of Bellarmine and his works than they otherwise deserve, as it is from that source that the Ritualists of the day mainly derive their arguments.

APPENDIX E.

(p. 38.)

VICAR OF CHRIST.

THE absorbent faculty possessed in so remarkable a degree by the Roman Pontiffs has been largely developed in their appropriation of the title "Vicar of Christ." This designation was originally enjoyed by all priests and bishops in common

(August., *Quæst. Vet. et Nov. Test.*, c. 127; *Cyprian ad Cæcil.* Ep. lxii., p. 95 : Paris, 1836). In the progress, however, of the hierarchical system, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch assumed the appellation as more especially their own (Griesinger, *Mysteries of the Vatican*, B. ii., ch. i., p. 151). Till the end of the twelfth century, the Popes, being more intent on local than universal rule, contented themselves with the title "Vicar of Peter"; but after Innocent III., having a wider scope for their ambition, they gave the preference to "Vicar of Christ" (Beugnot, *Script. Rer. Gallic.*, x., Præf. 47). The title was partially restored to priests by the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv., *De Pœnit.*, c. 5), with the purpose of conferring additional dignity on the so-called Sacrament of Penance; but the obsequious Catechism of Trent afterwards reserved it for the Sovereign Pontiff, designating the Pope as the true and "legitimate Vicar of Christ" (p. 320: Dublin, 1829). The title was likewise in early times bestowed on temporal princes, to denote their authority as vicegerents of heaven in earthly matters. Eleutherius, bishop of Rome in the middle of the second century, styles Lucius, king of Britain, "Vicar of Christ" (Prideaux, *Introduction to History*). "The king, who is the Vicar of the highest King," occurs in Art. xiv. of the ecclesiastical laws of Edward the Confessor, confirmed by William I. (Hardouin, t. vi., pt. i., p. 988). The same title is applied to the emperors Conrad II., Frederic I., and others, to the time of Charles V. (Bowden, *Life of Gregory VII.*, B. i., ch. ii., p. 64, n.[1]; Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, ch. vii., p. 110). It was in virtue of the prerogatives, temporal and spiritual, conferred by this appellation, that Innocent IV. deposed the Emperor Frederic (Conc. Labb., t. xi., pt. i.; Conc. Lugd., i., col. 644, B.: Paris, 1671), and through the same have succeeding Popes assumed the right of assigning kingdoms, dethroning monarchs, relieving subjects from their allegiance, infringing every law, human or divine, violating the most solemn oaths, and nullifying every compact and obligation, civil, moral, or religious, inviolably observed by honest and honourable men.

APPENDIX F.

(p. 101.)

INTENTION.

The consequences of requiring the intention of the priest for the validity of a sacrament are thus forcibly depicted by Catarino, Bishop of Minori, in the Council of Trent:—

"Let there be a knave priest who feigneth, and hath not the intention to administer the true baptism to a child; who after, being a man grown, is created bishop of a great city, and liveth many years in that charge, so that he hath ordained a great part of the priests; it must be said that he, being not baptized, is not ordained, nor they ordained who are promoted by him. So, in that great city, there will be neither Eucharist, nor confession, because they cannot be without the sacrament of Order, nor Order without a true bishop, neither can he receive order who is not baptized. Behold millions of nullities of Sacraments, by the malice of one minister in one act only!" (Brent's translation of Paolo Sarpi's History of the Council of Trent, B. ii., p. 241: Lond., 1629). As Catarino could not be outreasoned, he was outvoted.

Even Bellarmine (*De Justif.*, l. iii., ch. viii., col. 846, A., t. iv.: Par., 1608, and *De Eccl. Mil.*, l. iii., c. x., t. ii., col. 139, 140), and Vega, Opusc., *De Justif.*, l. ix., c. 17, Compl. 1564), are forced to admit that no one can tell whether he has ever received a sacrament or not. Consequently, at the elevation of the host, no one knows whether he worships the living Christ, or a lifeless piece of bread. For a goodly company of Roman Catholic writers, all at loggerheads with each other on the subject, according to the fashion of that unanimous Church, see Blakeney, *Popery in its Social Aspects*, ch. xx., p. 187, 6th Ed.

APPENDIX G.

(p. 107.)

SEDUCTION THROUGH THE CONFESSIONAL.

TO Protestants in general, the prevalence of seduction in Roman Catholic countries by means of the confessional would sound incredible were it not attested with one voice by the records of history. When the righteous indignation of the Spanish laity of all ranks and classes wrung from Pius IV., in 1564, an order to investigate the conduct of the priesthood, and a commencement was made at Seville, the most distinguished city of the time, at first it would have appeared that the priests had been calumniated; for only a few women ventured to come forward, and these carefully muffled and disguised. Encouraged, however, by the first, others presented themselves in daily increasing numbers; the courts had to be augmented, the commissioners increased, the secretaries multiplied, the time for receiving evidence more and more enlarged, till at last it came out that there was scarcely a woman in Seville that had not been soli-

cited, nor a priest who had not been guilty of solicitation (Limborch, *History of the Inquisition*, B. iii., ch. xvii., p. 78, ed. 1731; Llorente, t. iii., ch. 28, ed. 1817). The papal edict had directed that the inquiry should extend over "the kingdom of Spain, and the cities and dioceses thereof." But Seville was quite enough. It was notorious that in every other city of Spain, and, in fact, in the whole Roman Catholic world, the result would have been the same. So the inquest was quashed, the evidence was ordered to be destroyed, and the whole affair, as far as possible, was consigned to oblivion. In Portugal, when the scandalous abuse of the confessional by the Jesuits became absolutely intolerable, the politic General of the Order directed the members of the Society at Coimbra, their principal establishment, to do penance by scourging themselves in public. That their minds were as little chastened as their bodies by the sham of a self-inflicted flagellation, is evident from an *aside* which they slyly addressed to the bystanders: "You see, good people, that we don't get our little pleasures scot-free" (Boucher, *Hist. des Jésuites*, t. i., ch. iii., p. 119). In England a Parliamentary petition complains that "in time of confession is the best time for wooing, and of privy continuance in deadly sin" (Allix, *Churches of the Albigenses*, ch. xxii., p. 241; and to the same effect, Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. iii., p. 221). At Turin, within these few years, Gurlino, curate of San Carlos, was convicted of having seduced thirty-three girls in confession; and at Antwerp, Koopman, vicar of the Catholic Church, ruined no less than eighty-two by the same diabolical means. With what odious hypocrisy these holy men prosecuted their vile trade, we may learn from Froude: "The confessors of the women were taken from the friars" [of the monastery], "and they were found to have abused their opportunities in the most infamous manner. With a hateful mixture of sensuality and superstition, the offence and absolution went hand in hand" (*Hen. VIII.*, vol. i., ch. x., p. 445). In the convent of Santa Croce, in the diocese of Pistoia, the father confessor lived for years in sin with nuns whom he had betrayed to their ruin, under the usual pretence of a divine revelation—the holy hypocrite regularly absolving them from guilt on the plea of their "good intentions," whatever these may have been (*Mémoires de Scipion de Ricci*, t. iii., p. 11). In fact, that a priest may absolve a woman with whom he sins occasionally, and not constantly and habitually, is laid down by Cœlestine (*De Sacr. Pœnit.*, c. 20); and is sanctioned by Graffius, Sancius, Vivaldus, Diana, and other famous casuists (Gibson, *Preservative*, vol. x., p. 230, ed. 1848). In Germany, likewise, the princes at the Diet of Nuremburg, A.D. 1522, complained to Adrian VI. that "the priests in secret confession succeed, by repeated efforts, in undermining the principles of unmarried and married women, who would otherwise have been virtuous,

and betray them into sins and public scandals" (Collette, *A Hundred Grievances*, sect. xxxi., p. 224). It is a curious fact that in South America, owing to the social etiquette which decrees that people may not confess to a priest who has seduced any of their relatives, confession sometimes becomes impossible (Roupel, *Catholic and Protestant Nations*, p. 34). In Rome, the favoured seat of priests, monks, and nuns, and compulsory confession, the results of the system may be judged of by the fact that, whereas in the capital of Protestant England the number of illegitimate births is 4 per cent. of the whole, in the capital of the Estates of the Church, while the births are 4,378, the foundlings are 3,160 a year (Hobart Seymour, *Evenings with the Jesuits*, pp. xxxix., xlix.). Thundering bulls against confessional solicitation are occasionally issued from the Seven Hills—such as those of Pius IV., in 1561, Clement VIII., in 1592, Gregory XV., in 1622, and Benedict XIV., in 1741; but these are for the outside world. Denunciation is practically discouraged; if persisted in, the information is evaded, or the trial collusive; the imprisonment is merely nominal, and the other penalties frivolous (Desanctis, *Roma Papale*, Let. xvi., n. iv., p. 417; Let. xx., n. iv., p. 509: Firenze, 1871; Mendham, *Spiritual Venality of Rome*, p. x.; Blakeney, *Moral Theology of St. A. Liguori*, ch. xv., p. 343; *Christian Testimony*, p. 67).

APPENDIX H.

(p. 122.)

BETRAYAL OF CONFESSION.

"It is not lawful to reveal anything that is told in confession, though it be to avoid the greatest evil that can happen" (Bellarmine, *Apol. adv. Reg. M. Brit.*, and Eudæmon Johannes, *Apol. pro Garnette*, c. 13), or "to save a whole commonwealth from damage temporal or spiritual" (Suarez, *Disp.* 33 *in* 3. *part. D. Thom.* sect. 1, n. 2), or "to save the lives of all the kings in Christendom" (Binet, *ap. Is. Casaub. Ep. ad Fontonem Ducæum*, p. 140). The seal of confession must be maintained even by falsehood and perjury, though the loss of a man's life, or the ruin of a state, be the consequence; nor can the Supreme Pontiff dispense with the obligation (Dens., *Theol.*, t. vi., *De Fractione Sigilli Sacramentalis*, n. 160). "The seal is an obligation of divine right most strict in every case, even where the safety of a whole nation were at stake" (St. A. Liguori, *Theol. Moral.*, n. 634). Quest.: "But, father, it may happen that my confessor

will make known my sin to another. What do you say?" Ans.: "Know that the confessor is bound to suffer himself to be burnt alive sooner than disclose a single venial sin confessed by a penitent" (*Instructions on the Commandments and Sacraments*, pt. ii., Lect. iv., *on Confession*, n. 49: Dublin and London, 1862).

These are brave words; and well adapted to attain their object, and bring the laity on their knees before the priests, in the confident expectation that promises so magnificently guaranteed are certain to be realized. The vital question, however, is, how far practice coincides with profession; and when it comes to be examined, it will be seen that expediency alone is the measure of this boasted secresy, and the popularity of the confessional the standard by which expediency is regulated. In the front are promising manifestos to attract confidence; in the background are fatal reservations to elude and betray it.

Saints not being canonized in the Roman Church till their lives and writings have been officially approved after many years of careful investigation, it will be an equitable arrangement to begin with the conduct of a saint,—not one of the common herd, of whom there are upwards of 5000 for every day of the year (Durandus, cited in Bayle, *Dict. Crit.*, s. v. Launoi, n. [G], p. 626: Amst., 1734)—but a saint who has also had the distinction of being a Sovereign Pontiff. And as the devotions on the festival of a saint generally contain a prayer to be guided by his example and instructions, it will be edifying to learn what kind of instructions and example is furnished by Saint Pius V.

I. "For the punishment of certain offences, he took advantage of the confessional, which ought to be an inviolable sanctuary. It has been already said that Montalto, whilst he was cardinal, under the pretence of zeal, piety and Christian humility, affected the reputation, with his habitual hypocrisy, of being frequently in the confessional chair; and the prevalent idea of his being an excellent man, and of a plain and simple character, attracted a considerable number of penitents, and of those especially who were burdened with the gravest offences, either having for their object a greater facility of absolution, or that believing and seeing him to be a man of retired habits and not likely to live long, they had not the dread of having before their eyes one who was acquainted with the inmost secrets of their consciences. But they grievously misreckoned when they confessed to a person who adroitly took care to assure himself of name and surname, which he committed to his memorandum book, probably with the intention of using the information at a fitting opportunity; as in fact he did. For no sooner was he made Pope than he gave the Governor of Rome a list of five persons, three men and two women, supplying him with the requisite particulars for finding them. He took care, however, not to

mention that they had confessed to him, though he positively assured him of the grave offence which each had committed. When the Governor replied that justice was not accustomed to proceed to imprisonment on informations, without the certainty of having witnesses, Sixtus answered, 'When you have imprisoned them, you can then, on the assurance of our word and our conscience, put them to the torture; for they will assuredly confess the offences of which we inform you.'"

Then follow the details of some instances of poor wretches who were hung or decapitated through their former confessions to Sixtus V.

"To these examples many others succeeded during the pontificate of Sixtus; and either as his memory suggested, or as he perused his memorandum book, he directed the apprehension of those whom he knew to be guilty, though by justice and in popular estimation they were regarded as respectable persons; whence the Governor sometimes looked upon the Pope as a conjuror.

"But as Sixtus had too much at heart the radical extirpation, not of heresy alone, but of other crimes, he was not content with what he had extracted from confessions, which was enough to afford material for the tribunals, but from time to time he summoned the attendance of confessors of the longest experience, and who were accustomed to draw the greatest concourse of penitents, and used his pursuasions sometimes to one, sometimes to another, that since crimes of the deepest dye were often confessed to them, they could reveal the whole to him without any offence to their consciences, and that they could make a report to the Pontiff without any danger attached to revealing a confession—he giving them absolution for the whole; and many allowed themselves to be induced to do this, bringing, in this manner, many unhappy wretches to the gallows."—Leti, *Vita di Sisto Quinto* [1585], Parte ii., Libro iv., pp. 158-61: Torino, 1852.

The proffered absolution would certainly have a slight advantage, as a matter of thrift, over resorting to his Holiness's Penitentiary; for, in the Taxa, disclosure of confessions is rated at 7 grossen. Taking the coin as equivalent to 2½*d.*, and multiplying by 12 to allow for difference in value of money at the present day, the penalty for an inexcusable betrayal would amount to 17*s.* 6*d.* (Mendham, *Life of Pius V.*, *Appendix*, p. 269; Id., *Spiritual Venality of Rome*, p. 98; Gibbings, *Taxes of the Apostolic Penitentiary*, p. 12, sq.)

Among many instances of betrayal of prisoners by their confessors, take the following:—

II. "The father of Diana" [Duchesse de Valentinois] "was John de Poictiers, Count de St. Valier. Having entered into the conspiracy of Charles of Bourbon, he mentioned the act in secret confession to a priest. The priest informed against him,

and he was condemned to death." (Thuanus, *Hist. Sui Temp.*, l. iii., *ad. an.* 1547.)

III. "Henry Forrest, one of the inferior ecclesiastics, being suspected of heretical opinions, was imprisoned; and a friar, named Laing, was appointed to hear his confession . . . . Forrest having confessed, depending upon secresy, that he thought Hamilton to be a good man, and wrongfully put to death, he was condemned the same as if he had openly asserted such an opinion, and burned at the north side of the Abbey Church of St. Andrews." (*The Lollards*, P. xiv., pp. 311, 312: Lond., 1840. R.T.S.)

IV. "At the assizes of Poictiers, priests were nominated to confess criminals with a prohibition for the prisoners to have recourse to others; and they were required, under penalty of death, to reveal the confessions. And this they have continued, and seem inclined to continue, to this day at Paris, by the same method of nominating the confessors, whom they still make use of, under the pretext that it is for a good end, and that they must not err in administrating justice, letting the guilty escape and the innocent suffer. And thus it gently passes into a custom, while they maintain that it should be so" (*Apologie pour Jean Chastel*, P. iii., ch. iii., p. 131).

The betrayal of confessions by priests to each other being more immediately referred to by Desanctis, the reader may be interested in seeing his statement supported by similar instances. The following is the evidence of Lawrence Morissey, a Roman Catholic priest:—

V. "The general opinion of Roman Catholics is, that priests do not think of or recollect the sins they hear in confession, and much less talk of and relate them to others; but, with the greatest regret, I can assert the contrary, and prove the fact. The dispensations of the Spanish tribunals, and the instructions issued to European and American confessors, should suffice to demonstrate the reality of sacramental disclosures and sacramental abuses. However, as foreign examples will not always convince the Irish, I shall unquestionably put the subject beyond all doubt. Some lay people informed me that they heard several priests in company relating some sins of a delicate nature, of which the said clergy acquired knowledge in the confessional under the seal of that sacred tribunal; at which they were greatly scandalised, but had not fortitude enough to reprimand, or sufficient knowledge to report them to their superiors, who ought to suspend them perpetually from their office. I have been present in company at different times when I witnessed priests revealing heinous sins sacramentally made known to them—some priests informed, without the least necessity, of most enormous crimes they heard in confession perpetrated between . . . . . In fact, several priests vie at times amongst themselves

to know which of them can relate and inform each other of the greatest and most odious sins communicated to them in the sacred confidential tribunal. They take a secret pride in having it in their power to make such communications. A bishop informed me of the sins of one of his penitents told him in confession, who was a respectable lady, and an acquaintance of mine. He even mentioned her name. Some coolness existed between a certain priest and myself, to whom I was in the habit of going to confession previous to our misunderstanding; in the course of some time after, he revealed my sacramental confession to others in my presence. I have often been an ocular witness to the abuses, licentiousness, and improper conduct of several clergymen in the confessional, who, in the place of healing and reconciling sinners, inflicted deep wounds both on their own souls and those of their penitents: converting the tribunal of forgiveness and reconciliation into that of binding and ensnaring —of grief and sorrow, into that of base pleasure and filthy lucre. It is, alas! become a mutual repository of vice and profanation —a mutual depravity and corruption among many. It is a most delicate, precarious, and dangerous adventure for any person to open his mind and disclose the secrets of his heart, and entrust his soul and eternal welfare into the hands of many priests. *Shall I be more explicit? Ah! I shudder at the idea*"—[the italics are in the original],—"I shall only say that this sacrament was considered before now as the pillar of the Roman Catholic Church, through which grace was conveyed and salvation obtained; but now it is considered by many priests and prelates as the pillar of the Holy Inquisition, the source of genuine information for sanguinary purposes, the security of absolute and universal influence, and the extermination of heretical pravity. In former days the sacraments would not be conferred on those who should be determined to murder, plunder, and defame; but in our anarchical times they would be conferred on none else by our sacerdotal inquisitors." (*The Second Part of a Development of a Cruel and Dangerous Inquisitorial System of the Court of Rome in Ireland*, etc., by Rev. L. Morissey, Parish Priest of Oning and Templemore, pp. 29, 30, 31: Dublin, 1822. For further information on the author and book, *v.* McGhee, *Laws of the Papacy*, p. 149, sq.)

VI. "But the oath of secrecy is by no means so inviolable as it is given out to be. The following are the words of one who was himself a Popish priest for some time. Referring to another priest whom he occasionally met, he says:—

"All our conversation ran upon the stories he heard in confession. . . . . But he is not the only person who is free in revealing what he has heard; for it is the ordinary discourse of the priests, when they meet, to inform one another of what they have heard in confession. This I can assert, because I was

often present at such conferences, where the conversation was so indecent, that even an honest pagan would have blushed" (Protestant, vol. ii., p. 331, in Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, B. ii., ch. x., p. 222, col. 2 : Lond., 1844).

This is from Erasmus, likewise a Roman Catholic priest :—

VII. "And these, especially the mendicants, though they are not officers of State, none dare to make light of; for by means of what they call confessions, they are in possession of every secret of every person without exception. They hold it indeed to be forbidden to reveal confessions, unless at times when, having drunk freely, they are in humour for diverting themselves with amusing stories; but at first they suppress the names, and only intimate the facts by hints. But if any one provoke the hornets, then in their popular harangues they take a sure revenge, pointing out their enemy so slyly with indirect remarks, that no one who understands anything can fail to understand their meaning; nor do they cease their barking till you have thrown them a sop to silence them" (*Encom. Mor.*, p. 113; Lugd. Batav. 1617).

Extract of a letter from Sister Flavia Peraccini to Dr. Tommaso Comparini, Rector of the Episcopal Seminary, June 22 (the year, probably, 1775, or 1781) :—

VIII. "Every day they" [the Dominican monks] "came, and talked most licentiously, relating things that had happened at the Holy Office at Perugia, confessions they had heard, etc." (De Potter, *Vie et Mémoires de Scipion de Ricci*, t. i., p. 297 : Paris, 1826.)

The following exhibits the famous Savonarola as acquiring the reputation of a prophet, with the aid of confederates, through the clandestine use of the confessional :—

IX. "Brother Jerome" (Savonarola) "was committed to prison; and after he had been seven times subjected to interrogations and tortures, he prayed for mercy, offering to detail and write out all the offences he had committed. Being dismissed from torture and remitted to prison, paper and ink were supplied to him, and he wrote an account of his crimes and delinquencies on eighty sheets and upwards, as they asserted; acknowledging that he had never had any divine revelation, but kept up an understanding with many friars residing in the city of Florence, and for several miles round, who revealed to him the confessions of their penitents, with their names and surnames. From these confessions he extracted the materials of many of his remarks; and sometimes rebuked the penitents in private for their sins and iniquities, and sometimes censured them in general terms in public—affirming that these things had been revealed to him by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (*Excerpta ex Diario Johannis Burchardi*, p. 55 : Hanov., 1696).

X. In the impious and inhuman fraud by which the five

wounds of the cross were inflicted by the Dominican monks on their wretched dupe Jetser, the faith of the victim "was augmented by hearing from the spectre all the secrets of his life and thoughts; which the impostors had learned from his confessor" (Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. xvi., sect. i., ch. i., vol. 4, p. 20, note [K]: Lond., 1825).

Bishop Burnet, who states that he read the whole of the original process in the Latin record, writes thus :—

"The friar's confessor was in the secret ; and by this means they knew all the little passages of the poor friar's life, even to his thoughts, which helped them not a little in the conduct of the matter" (*Letters containing an account, etc., in travelling through Switzerland, etc.*, p. 36, sq.: Lond., 1724).

As in so many other cases, the life of Jetser was attempted by administering poison to him in the consecrated host.—Ibid.

XI. "I blush to write it, but many" [Italian Liberals] "were found sufficiently vile to bear witness against their companions, at the instigation of their confessor. Among the names thus revealed were those of nearly all the Liberals who have endured and are enduring exile and imprisonment. Often the confessors who revealed the accusations brought in the confession of the dying against others ; and in order to cover their own wickedness, declared that the penitents had authorized them to reveal their confessions. Thus a Capuchin friar, confessor to the fortress of Città Castellana, in the Roman States, before 1848, repeated to the Bishop a denunciation against nine persons made by a dying convict. The Bishop transmitted the information to the Holy Office, which, according to rule, sent it to the Secretary of State ; and you, O reader, may picture to yourself the consequences that ensued." (*Incidents in the Life of an Italian—Priest, Soldier, Refugee—by Luigi Bianchi*, ch. viii., p. 150. London: Nisbet and Co., 1859.)

Here is another of the same kind :—

XII. "I afterwards learned that a new prisoner, who had been placed in a cell near to my own for some misconduct, two or three days before, had informed his father confessor that he had seen me go out and converse with other prisoners ; and from what he had heard, it appeared that I had preached Protestant doctrines to them, and that they had become my followers. The confessor told all this to the Cardinals, but, fortunately for me, he had the reputation of being so great a liar that he obtained no credit with them for his statement, however true it might be, and I heard no more of it." (Rev. Giacinto Achilli, D.D., *Dealings with the Inquisition*, ch. xvi., p. 467 : Lond., 1851.)

The extent to which the Inquisition availed itself of disclosures of the confessional may be inferred from the character of its archives when they fell into the hands of the Republic. The

account is far too copious to transcribe. A brief extract may give some faint idea of it :—

XIII. "The immense establishment of the Inquisition, extending into every place, having its eyes fixed upon every thing, from the confessional of the female bigot to the palace of the king, examines every thing, studies every thing, takes note of every thing. . . . . .

"Nothing does it respect—neither the sanctity of the domestic hearth, nor the solemnity of oaths, nor the secrecy of the confessional. All is treachery and calumny in its correspondence. Here are seen letters of Piedmontese bishops, proposing to rebel, etc. Farther on the eyes fall on the reports of a confessor, docketed with the sacramental words "*sotto segreto*," which correspond with the *confidential* of diplomatists. There are numbers of these reports from abroad, which have been transmitted by the nuncios." (Desanctis, *Roma Papale*, Let. xiii., n. ii., p. 314 : Firenze, 1871.)

Similar testimony has been borne by foreign Inquisitions when their records have become accessible.

XIV. An English traveller, Mr. Stevenson, who gained admission into the Inquisition at Lima, in Peru, when it was sacked, on the 3rd September, 1813, mentions that he carried to his house fifteen despatches of processes of little importance, and adds that two of them had, in the first act of the process, the denunciation of the accused by their own confessors. (*Francisco Moyen, or the Inquisition as it was in South America.* By B. Vicuña Mackenna, pp. 150, '1, n.* Translated, etc., Lond., 1869.)

That the betrayal of confessions is the mainspring of the political machinery of the Jesuits scarcely needs a proof. The testimony of a writer may suffice who was intimately acquainted with the working of their system :—

XV. "With respect to the universal police of the Jesuits, it is as skilfully organised as that of the most powerful political states. I imagine that it has even a precious and inexhaustible source of intelligence, of which the civil police is destitute,—the thousand intimations which reach it through the confessional, always excepting the acknowledgment of faults, an object, I believe, of rigorous secresy with the Jesuits. It is well known that the Jesuits never undertake the direction of any woman of the world, but on condition of being informed of her name, her position in point of fortune, the political opinions of her husband, the newspapers admitted into the family, the institutions where her children are educated. This evidently presents a more certain method of knowing in a short time what passes in the inner life of families than the police could ever attain. To adhere strictly to truth, I ought to add that the Jesuits who thus submit to act as spies send in reports to their superiors with the idea

of being useful to religion, and of contributing to the greater glory of God. They are human means employed in the service of the holy cause. Unfortunately for them, and for those who do not understand the inherent baseness of such a system, the world external to religious influences entertains for it an insuperable horror. To accept the idea that it is allowable to resort to base means of doing good, is repugnant to common honesty. In the world there is a difficulty in believing that Christ desired His disciples to act as spies and informers for the salvation of souls.

"Above all, it is a source of special wonder that it is possible to bind honest Christian natures to so infamous a trade, and that there exists any system powerful enough to produce the belief that acts are good and beautiful, which, in themselves, are vile and shameful. This, very probably, is what Lamennais intended, when he spoke of 'something against natures.'" (*Le Maudit*, vol. i., ch. xiv., p. 168 : Paris, 1864.)

Though Ignatius originally forbade the acceptance of civil or ecclesiastical dignities, yet the palpable advantage in possessing the secrets of royalty by means of the confessional were too tempting to be resisted.

XVI. "Gonzalez refused the dignity of confessor to the King of Portugal, but he was obliged instantly to enter upon the office by the command of the General" [Loyola], "who pointed out the necessity of refusing a mitre, or a Cardinal's hat, which might alienate him from the Society, yet he insisted that a Jesuit should gladly become confessor to a king ; for by discovering his inmost secrets, and by perfect access at all times, he would do the *Order* infinite service." (Godfrey Massey, *Secret History of Romanism*, p. 11, 2nd ed.: Lond., 1853, quoting Hospinian, 242.)

The nature of the perfidious services rendered by these Jesuit emissaries to the General of the Order is thus described by Duller :—

XVII. "They," [the Jesuits,] "were, however, in duty bound to let no opportunity slip of securing and retaining the favour of their royal penitent, which must be dexterously made efficient towards furthering the general interests of their Order ; and they were further enjoined, in all cases of doubt or difficulty, in which a sovereign sought their counsel, to refer the matter to their superior, and obtain his decision, before giving their own reply ; in reference to which it must be mentioned, as an essential part of the system, that the *confessions of sovereign princes were at all times communicated to the General of the Order*. This was doubtless a most criminal breach of confessional secrecy; but the crime was, as usual, excused on the ground of the good end for which it was committed—the advantage of the Order. Thus the Jesuit General, though residing at Rome, was cognisant of the most secret thoughts and designs of every Catholic prince throughout

Europe, and could by their confessors, who were his creatures, turn and guide them as so many puppets, according to his good pleasure, and through them the nations likewise; so that by means of such kingly slaves, or rather bailiffs, he could get every enemy of his Order, every friend of truth and liberty, into his power, and convert that royal majesty to which the nations naturally look for protection, safety, and blessing, into the tool of a foreign despotism." (*The Jesuits as they were and are.* By Edwd. Duller, translated from the German by Mrs. Stanley Care, ch. iv., pp. 72, '3: Lond., 1845.)

N.B.—Duller was a Roman Catholic.

Sometimes, however, this formidable engine of their power was converted into an instrument for their destruction; as in this anecdote of the Empress Maria Theresa and her confessor.

XVIII. "The influence of the minister, Kaunitz, over the mind of the Empress was, as" [the Emperor] "Joseph here acknowledges, very considerable, and this influence he used to turn her against the Jesuits: for by obtaining from Madrid a copy of the sins which she had at the previous Easter confessed to the priest, he showed how even the secrets of the confessional are used for political purposes." ("History of the Protestant Church in Hungary," ch. xiv., p. 344: translated by the Rev. J. Craig, D.D.: London, Jas. Nisbet & Co., 1854; and Duller, "The Jesuits as they were and are," ch. ix., p. 156.)

XIX. "But the fathers of the Company," [of the Jesuits,] "by means of the confessors, ... are accurately and minutely informed of all the points discussed and determined in the most secret councils, and are almost as well, if not better, acquainted than the princes themselves, with the state of their revenue, their expenditure, and even their designs, etc. . . . . In a word, they cause rebellions and outbreaks in the lands of those princes, which they have the more effectual means of doing owing to their knowledge of the inmost secrets of the hearts of the subjects through the medium of confessions." (*Instructions for Princes, attributed to Arias Montanus, in the "History of the Jews in Spain," by Don Adolfo de Castro,* pp. 249, 250: Cambridge, 1851.)

XX. "And so they came to all the secrets that were in men's hearts, so that emperor nor king could say or do, nor think anything in his heart, but they knew it, and so applied all the purposes and intents of princes to their own commodities. And this was the fruit of their auricular confession."—Bp. Latimer, Sermon on Matt. viii., 1—3.

XXI. "By means of the religious orders submitted to its power and discipline, the Holy See was enabled to penetrate into the secrets of the laws, and the feelings of the people. The confessional of every Catholic monarch found its corresponding echo beneath the dome of the Vatican."

And, a little further on : "The revelation of secrets, and surveillance, form part of the oath imposed on priests." (Briffault, *Le Secret de Rome*, pp. 105, '6, quoted in Roupel, *Catholic and Protestant Nations compared*, vol. ii., p. 136.)

XXII. "The messenger between the Council of Trent and the Jesuits of Paris, was Ludovick de Freake, formerly a priest in England. Part of his instructions were thus, to take notice of the confessions of the people of France, and especially of the nobles and gentry, and in case they suspect anything detrimental to the Holy See of Rome, then to confer with three or more confessors of the suspition, and so to take memorandums to be asked of the party so suspected the next time.

"Also to converse with the noblest, and to discourse variably until they find which way he is inclinable most, and to please them accordingly in their discourse ; and in case any of you be, or chance to be any of their confessors, ye are to take memorandums of things doubtful and suspitious, and at the next confession to urge them to those parties then confessing, by which any three or more are to consult, and give the See of Rome intelligence more or less, that the Mother Church might be informed, and all evil prevented that is or shall be intended against her." (*Foxes and Firebrands*, P. ii., pp. 27, 28 : Dublin, 1682.

XXIII. "Father Cotton was strongly suspected of having betrayed to them" [the Spaniards] "his royal penitent" [Hen. IV.], "and of having revealed to the King of Spain the secrets of the confessional. It is certain, at all events, that Father Cotton was disgraced for six weeks, because the King learnt that his confessor wrote the amorous secrets of his penitent to a" [Jesuit] "Provincial in Spain. Under the regency of Mary of Medici, Louis XIII., at that time very young, but acquainted with this anecdote, clearly showed that he believed it, by saying one day to Father Cotton, when he asked him his opinion, 'I shall say nothing to you ; for you would write it to Spain.'" (Boucher, *Histoire des Jésuites*, t. ii., p. 96 : Paris, 1845.)

CONFESSION A SYSTEM OF EPISCOPAL ESPIONAGE.

XXIV. "The course of sermons for Lent being concluded, the preacher presents himself to the Bishop, to give an account of the town in which he has been preaching, and he finds himself in a condition to report exactly the tendencies of the people, political and religious ; as, during his stay, he has confessed almost the whole population—receiving confession being an integral part of his mission.

"The confessor, therefore, knows who are faithful to Pope and King, etc., and is able to repeat everything to the Bishop. The preacher is the spy of the Bishop, and the Bishop the spy of the Government, so that confession is the most subtle engine of espionage." (*Incidents in the Life of an Italian, Priest—*

Soldier—Refugee, by Luigi Bianchi, ch. ii., p. 29. London: Nisbet and Co., 1859.)

The above is a description of the writer's experience in his first course as a Lent preacher.

XXV. "Our fathers discovered the heresies at Naples," boasts the Theatine Caracciolo,* "and in the following manner. Raniero Gualante and Antonio Cappone, by their intercourse with Valdez and Ochino, had themselves become somewhat defiled with their pitch; but in confession our fathers led them on to relate everything they knew concerning their secret heresies. By these means our people became aware that Valdez and Ochino were sowing tares in the assemblies of men and women they were in the habit of holding." (Benrath, *B. Ochino*, ch. iii., pp. 69, 70.)

XXVI. "Dr. Leone, while describing his residence in a Jesuit College, shows that the microscopic vigilance exercised over novices is unchanged. He one day enters the rector's study. It is empty; and to pass away the time he examines the books most convenient to the easy chair. He takes one down; another appears behind it; that also being removed, he discovers a third row of books, entitled, 'Confessions of Novices.' Taking the book into his hand, he finds the front edge indented alphabetically. Turning to his own name, he, to his amazement, reads thus, ... etc. He proceeds in examining other great registers, and finds one containing confessions of strangers, which possessed such a well-digested body of information upon persons of every age and class for many miles round, that a newly-arrived Jesuit could, in a few hours, profit by the experience of many predecessors, so as to know the fortune, family, and propensities of all with whom he might possibly have to do. The next book he opened was a register of their revenues, acquisitions, and expenses. In feverish impatience he quits it for a huge folio inscribed 'Enemies of the Society.' While turning over its leaves, which seemed to condense volumes in paragraphs, describing the characters, abilities, and failings of their antagonists, ... etc." (Massey, *Secret History of Romanism*, ch. ii., p. 105, sq., 2nd ed., quoting *Secret Plan*, 16, English translation, 1848.)

XXVII. "As the exorbitant ecclesiastical power of the Church of Rome is bound up intimately, and by a well-known analogy, with absolute power and civil despotism, the confessional is converted into a political engine by a true espionage, by means of which is discovered every liberal tendency, and everything that can offend the supreme authority.

"At the restoration of Ferdinand VII. to Spain, when the persecution of the Liberal party became the essence of that monarch's policy, the confessors were actively occupied, by

* Vita di Paolo IV., MS.

command of the Bishops, in these odious examinations and inquiries. Thus the wife was made to denounce the husband, the son the father, and the friend the friend. Peace, thus disturbed, fled from the bosom of families. . . . . The penitent saw himself obligated to accuse, before the tribunal of the Inquisition, any persons whom he knew to be members of the Lodge" [of Freemasons], "although bound to such persons by the ties of kindred or friendship." (*Roman Catholicism in Spain, by an Old Resident*, ch. viii., pp. 157,'8.)

In the Memoirs of Henrietta Caracciolo, an ex-Benedictine nun, there is an instance of the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples intercepting and opening a privileged confession of the nun addressed to the Pope :—

XXVIII. "Strange! the letter written in confession to the Pope, and kept secret from the confessor himself, had been in the first instance handed to the Cardinal.

"The sanctity of a sealed letter violated, and the seal of confession broken."—Memoirs, u.s., ch. xvii., p. 235 : Lond., 1864.

The incident is thus alluded to afterwards :—

"The Cardinal Archbishop, ... the bearer of the very letter which I had addressed to his Holiness under the seal of confession, intercepted and opened by himself." (Ib., ch. xix., p. 260.)

Again,—"The spy system would then operate in the following manner: The maid-servant's communication went to the grocer, or the apothecary, or landlord, and often to the doctor of the neighbourhood; from these it was transmitted, under the seal of confession, to the rector, thence to the Bishop, thence again it passed *ipso facto* to the commissary, from him to the cabinet of the King." (Ib., ch. xxiv., p. 348.)

L. Desanctis, intimately acquainted, through his own experience, with the inner working of Popery, describes the following scene of trickery on the part of the Jesuits to elicit unguarded confessions from their pupils :—

XXIX. "The Jesuits have had their St. Louis Gonzaga declared Protector of youth by the Pope. On the strength of this office, St. Louis is mediator for boys with God, and presents their requests to Him. Every year, on the festival of St. Louis, all the scholars of the Jesuits have to compose a memorial to St. Louis, in which each, unfolding to the Saint the state of his conscience, requests of him the favour he more especially desires. All the memorials are enclosed in suitable silk cases, more or less enriched, embroidered with gold or not, according to the means of the lads, and are consigned to their respective masters. On the eve of the festival, before the solemn vespers, the boys, accompanied by the masters, carry the memorials to the altar of the saint on silver trays with great solemnity, and arrange them in order. There they remain the day of the festival.

"About a month afterwards a great festival is kept in the garden, and all the memorials, taken from their coverings, are brought and solemnly burnt. In that month the Jesuits have had time to read them all, and to know the most hidden secrets, which the simple lad believed he was revealing to his protector St. Louis. What iniquity, thus to abuse the simplicity of young lads!"—L. Desanctis, *Roma Papale*, Let. xv., n. iii., pp. 372,'3.

XXX. "But it will be said, The confessor is bound to secrecy by the seal of confession. How many things are people bound to, and yet they are not done! The seal of confession is a most beautiful thing in theory, but is it observed in practice? And then, in the hands of Jesuits, what is the seal? When everything has to be directed to the greater glory of God, when the means to arrive at that end are never bad, because they are indifferent,—if, for the greater glory of God, a revelation is necessary, will there be any scruple in making it?" (Desanctis, *Roma Papale*, Let. xiv., note xv., p. 340).

XXXI. "'*If a sinful intention*,' says Bishop Taylor, '*of committing a grievous crime be revealed* in confession, and the person confessing cannot desist from, or will not alter his purpose, that *the seal of confession may then be broken*,' is affirmed by Alexander of Arles,* by the Summa Angelica,† which also reckons five cases more in which it is lawful to reveal confessions. The same also is taught by Panormitan,‡ by Hostiensis,§ the Summa Sylvestrina,|| and by Pope Innocent himself."¶ Such is the assertion of Bishop Taylor, and such are the references by which it is supported.**

XXXII. "Still there was an eye upon Izerni George which never slept—the power which the priest exercises over the penitent in the confessional, and which the far-seeing government at St. Petersburg knows how to wield with such advantage. In the civilized West, where the conscience of the revolutionist is not so sensitive as to oblige him to confess the entire amount of his peccadilloes, especially if they are political, the spiritual father cannot always lend his aid to the government; but here there is ever to be found a sufficient number of devotees ready to unburden their minds, and so divulge sufficient information of

* P. iv. q. 28, num. 2, Art. 2, in respons.

† Confess., ult. num., 7.

‡ Cap. Omnis de Pœnit. et Remiss., num. 34.

§ Super. 5, cap. omnis.

|| In confess. 3, num. 2.

¶ In cap. omnis. Verb. Prod.

** See Bp. Taylor's Works, Bp. Heber's ed., vol. ii., p. 6, on the Seal of Confession. See also De Soto, who was one of the Council of Trent, and other references, ap. Bp. Taylor, vol. iv., p. 615. (Townsend, *Accusations of History against the Church of Rome*, Let. xvi., pp. 303, '4.)

what is going forward as to be intelligible to the ear of the wary priest. This was the case with the hero of Servia," etc. (Edmund Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey*, vol. i., p. 48: Lond., 1851).

This instance, it is true, is from the Greek Church. But it only strengthens the argument; for it shows that wherever confession is established, treachery follows it as a shadow.

In Mendham's "Memoirs of the Council of Trent," an indirect mode of revealing confessions is touched on in the following text and note.

XXXIII. "They mention, that on the highest authority they were informed that six or eight Lutherans were amongst them," [the prelates deputed by Spain,] "whose names they decline stating, since they were obtained through the medium of confession." *

And now what has become of those grandiloquent announcements of confessors who were ready to be roasted alive rather than be false to the confidence reposed in them? There are accounts of thousands—aye, hundreds of thousands—who have betrayed the secrets of their penitents. But does history preserve the record of a single confessor who perished at the stake rather than reveal the mysteries of the confessional? The active rather than the passive part of the performance is the *rôle* that Romish priests are prone to enact at an *auto-da-fé*. Besides, it is left entirely to their own option to divulge crimes, whether intended or already perpetrated. The former has been shown above (xxxi.) to be the case, from the opinions of many learned divines; and, be it remembered, the approval of one single Doctor renders any action whatever both safe and probable. Revelation of the past, too, is contingent on the confessor's own opinion of its expediency; for "The Doctors," says Dens ("Moral Theology," vol. vi., p. 222), "have providently ordained that we should abstain from such narrations, *when not moved by reasons of utility*." Again: "A confessor may narrate the sins heard in confession, if the sinner can by no means be discovered, nor any prejudice happen to himself" (Ibid.). Again: "Those persons are bound by the seal to whom the confessor has revealed without the licence of the penitent" (Ibid., vol. vi., p. 231). Therefore confessors do reveal without permission. Such permission, in fact, the priests can always extort by threatening to withhold absolution (Ibid., vol. vi., p. 232),—in other words, by leaving the penitent, according to their belief, to perish in a state of mortal sin. Should the penitent protest that he refused permission, and the priest assert that it was granted, the priest is to be believed in preference to the

* The great and irrefragable author, as the writers call the informant, understood how to get over the difficulties of his profession.

penitent (*La Croix*, vol. vi., n. 1969). In short, it is entirely at the confessor's beck and pleasure whether he shall keep or betray the secrets of his penitent.

As for observing secrecy because of the baseness and treachery of betraying a sacred confidence, or because the poor wretch must either put trust in the priest, or, according to the popish creed, go into perdition, or because the priest, occupying, as they believe, the place of the Deity, should therefore adhere to His attributes of faithfulness and truth,—such ideas do not present themselves in books on confession. The great and prominent object throughout is to maintain the popularity of confession, which would be endangered if confidence in it were shaken. And it is remarkable that in twenty-six successive paragraphs in Liguori's "Moral Theology," numbered 633—659, twenty-six times is the danger of unpopularity assigned for observing secrecy under certain specified conditions.

The manifold other evils, originating in the same motive, which have been inflicted on religion and morality, there is not space available to describe.

APPENDIX I.

(p. 125.)

ECCLESIASTICAL WILL HUNTING.

THE grasping cupidity of ecclesiastical will hunters, and the consequent ruin of innocent and helpless families, form the subject of an indignant remonstrance of the German princes at the Diet of Nuremberg, A.D. 1523 (Collette, *A Hundred Grievances*, sec. xciii., p. 285). That the popes should have connived at these fraudulent artifices, need not be a matter of surprise; for a considerable number of the multitudinous clerical host must, no doubt, have died intestate, and all such property, by a decree of Innocent IV., was to escheat to the Pope (Staveley, *The Romish Horseleach*, ch. iii., p. 26: Lond., 1762). To such a length was this execrable practice sometimes carried, that the last sacraments were denied to the dying man till he consented to make a will in the priest's favour (De Potter, *Vie et Mémoires de Scipion di Ricci*, t. iv., p. 11: Paris, 1826). To facilitate their nefarious designs, the clergy were provided with testamentary forms that might be executed at a moment's notice (Mendham, *Indulgences*, etc., p. xxxiv.).

For the further promotion of ecclesiastical interests, wills, before they were proved, were subject to a private preliminary examination in a "special court" called St. Peter's Tribunal

(Griesinger, *Mysteries of the Vatican*, vol. ii., b. vi., ch. ii., p. 252). And, for still greater security, popes are equipped with the power of altering testamentary dispositions in favour of the Church (St. A. Liguori, *Theol. Moral.*, t. iv., p. 214, n. 931, A.; Paleario, *Atto, di Accusa*, p. 174; Cartwright, *Jesuits*, pp. 184, '5.) A similar power is likewise vested in the General of the Jesuits (Duller, *Jesuits as they were and are*, p. 52). Wycliffe, on his death-bed, testifies that the priests attending on the dying were commanded by the Pope to extract bequests in favour of the Church, under the name of Crusades. It is sad to observe the declension of the Christian clergy from their primitive integrity so early as A.D. 362, when they are accused by Julian the Apostate of making wills and appropriating estates to their own use (Lardner, *Heathen Testimonies*, vol. iv., ch. xlvi., p. 208: Lond., 1767). But we find in the Theodosian Code that this abuse was prohibited soon afterwards by Valentinian and Theodosius. As one of the last efforts of the expiring liberty of the Gallican Church, it was decreed at a Council held at Orleans in 1561, that "Ecclesiastics should not receive legacies, or anything left them by last will" (P. Sarpi, *Hist. Conc. Trid.*, l. v., p. 360; Aug. Trinob., 1620, and p. 442: Lond., 1629). How different the proposed reform is from the present corrupt state of the Roman priesthood, may be safely inferred from the numerous trials in Irish courts of justice, in spite of numbers of cases that are hushed up or compromised, where the inheritance of the deceased is disputed between the priest and the surviving relatives.

APPENDIX K.

(p. 146.)

MAXIMS OF GREGORY VII.

THE twenty-seven maxims of "The Excommunicating Pope," which are nearly identical in spirit with the counsels that have latterly prevailed in the Vatican, may be seen, among other places, in Bowden, *Life of Gregory VII.*, vol. ii., pp. 304-5: Lond., 1840; and in Desanctis, *Il Papa*, pp. 259, 260: Firenze, 1864. Their genuineness is admitted by Janus (*The Pope and the Council*, p. 107, 2nd ed.), and by Baronius, Lupus, Panvinius, De Marca, and other critics (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, b. iii., ch. xiv., p. 706, col. 1: Lond., 1844), but it is doubted by Dollinger (*Papal Fables*, p. 144). The truth seems to lie between the two opinions, the maxims having been apparently extracted from published and unpublished works o

Hildebrand, and thrown into their present form by some unknown author (Mosh., *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. xi., P. ii., ch. ii., § ix., n. [w].

For a person whom Rome claims to have admitted into the company of the glorified saints in heaven, his character, as drawn by his fellow-Romanists, is rather curious. His intimate friend and associate, St. Peter Damiani, styles him that "Holy Satan" (Bowden, u. s., b. i., ch. vii., p. 245). Cardinal Benno describes him as an "impious, perjured, perfidious, cruel, proud, superstitious man" (Spanheim, cent. xi.). The Servite monk, Father Paul, places him, as a Pope, on a level with the dissolute and bloodthirsty Julius II. (*Eccles. Benefices*, ch. xxii., p. 92, n. [10]: Westminster, 1736). The Council of Brescia terms him that "most petulant Hildebrand, a preacher of sacrilege and conflagrations, a patron of perjuries and murders, bringing into question the catholic and apostolic faith concerning the body and blood of the Lord, an old disciple of Berengarius, an evident necromancer" *Brix. Syn. Ep. apud Abb. Usperg in Chron.*, ad an. 1080). That Gregory really shared the opinions of Berengarius against Transubstantiation, may be seen in Mosh., *Eccles. Hist.*, cent. xi., P. ii., ch. iii., § 17, n. [z.]. The invectives against Hildebrand for his arrogant defiance of all laws, human and divine, were no less vehement at the Council of Worms than at Brescia. And the famous champion of Romanism, Dr. Doyle, informs us, on the authority of the chronicler Sigebert, that when Gregory "found himself near his end, he acknowledged that he had, at the instigation of the devil, stirred up enmities and strife among mankind" (Dr. Phillpotts, Supplementary Letter to C. Butler, p. 250: Lond., 1866.) The impartial but vigorous pen of Mosheim depicts him as crafty and ambitious, haughty and arrogant beyond all measure; obstinate, impetuous, and untractable; void of all principle, destitute of every virtuous and pious feeling; suffering little restraint from the dictates of religion or the remonstrances of conscience (*Eccles. Hist.*, cent. xi., P. ii., ch. ii., § ix.). These may be *Roman*, but are certainly not *Christian* virtues. No wonder that the canonization of such a specimen of unregenerate humanity was indignantly repudiated by civilized Europe! The liberal and enlightened religion of Ireland alone reveres and worships him.

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